CHRISTIAN · WISDOM
SERIES

LIBRARY OF PRINCETON
JUN 22 1953
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

BL 205 .S62 1951
Smith, Gerard.
Natural theology:
Metaphysics II

3^{50}

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2025 with funding from
Princeton Theological Seminary Library

https://archive.org/details/naturaltheologym00smit

NATURAL THEOLOGY

Christian Wisdom Series

EDITORIAL BOARD

Anton C. Pegis, F.R.S.C., *Chairman*
President, Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, Toronto, Canada
Robert E. Brennan, O.P.
Saint Mary of the Springs College, Columbus, Ohio
Gerald B. Phelan, F.R.S.C.
Director, The Mediaeval Institute, University of Notre Dame
Gerard Smith, S.J.
Director of the Department of Philosophy, Marquette University

ETHICS—*A Textbook in Moral Philosophy*
by VERNON J. BOURKE

⁂

NATURAL THEOLOGY—*Metaphysics II*
by GERARD SMITH, S.J.

⁂

LIBRARY OF PRINCETON
JUN 22 1953
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

NATURAL THEOLOGY

METAPHYSICS II

GERARD SMITH, S.J.
Professor and Director of the
Department of Philosophy,
Marquette University

NEW YORK
The Macmillan Company

IMPRIMI POTEST:

Daniel H. Conway, S.J.,

PROVINCIAL, MISSOURI PROVINCE,
AUGUST 29, 1950.

NIHIL OBSTAT:

John Kelly, C.S.B.,

CENSOR DEPUTATUS.

IMPRIMATUR:

James C. Cardinal McGuigan,

ARCHBISHOP OF TORONTO.

DATED JUNE 10, 1951.

COPYRIGHT 1951 BY THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

All rights reserved—no part of this book may be reproduced in any form without permission in writing from the publisher, except by a reviewer who wishes to quote brief passages in connection with a review written for inclusion in magazine or newspaper.

First Printing

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

AMICO MEO
ANTON C. PEGIS
INSCIO FORSAN
QUOT QUANTAQUE ME DOCUERIT,
HOC QUALECUMQUE OPUSCULUM
TESTIMONIO ESSE CUPIO
ME NON ESSE IMMEMOREM
MAGISTRI
G.S., S.J.

FOREWORD

Any teacher will agree that no textbook is quite satisfactory. Yet there must be textbooks. A textbook should assemble and establish the propositions which are necessary and sufficient for the understanding of a subject. Life is too short for every learner to do this for himself. He needs to be assured that everything in a textbook is pertinent and that it suffices for a basic understanding of the matter.

In this book I have tried to do that job of assembling and establishing propositions, not by way of reporting or of giving the results of my thinking, but by expressing the thinking itself which led to the conclusions.

If the job has been done in any successful measure whatsoever, probably the most disastrous thing a teacher could do with this book is to teach it with one thumb on the text. It is fatal to try to teach by "transferring" knowledge from one head to another. Knowledge can be caused by adapting discourse to circumstances. For example, if one is to teach the meaning of Plato's proposition that the diagonal of a square is incommensurable with its sides, one might say to an American student that no one can measure the distance from home-plate to second base so as to have that distance come out exactly even with any division of any rules. *That* an American boy or girl can understand, not because Plato's expression is not clear, correct, much better in fact, but because Plato's discourse, in the instance, is not well adapted (I have found) to American students. The teacher fits his words to his audience. No one else can do this. Certainly no textbook can do it. The most one can expect to find in a textbook is a correct expression of doctrine. A teacher must cut from this cloth to suit the customer. A textbook is simply an assurance that it is the right cloth he is cutting from. That the present text is the right cloth is a judgment which must await, of course, the decision of teachers. If it is, there is one reason before all others why this is so: St. Thomas Aquinas. There are also other reasons: Dr. Anton C. Pegis, President of the Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, and Dr. Lottie H. Kendzierski of Marquette University. My debt to Dr. Pegis I have more or less acknowledged in the dedication. To say that Dr. Kendzierski saw this book through the press is less than the truth. She has so edited this piece that it turns out to be what I meant to say.

Other acknowledgments I have made in the notes, but I am sure that I have used the thought and even expressions of many whom I cannot remember, so indistinguishable has their thinking become from my own. To these I can say, interpolating but one word from Propertius' text: *floreant qui ante nos nostra dixerunt.*

Gerard Smith, S.J.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION 1

Theology Is Speculative Knowledge 1
  The meaning of knowledge 1
    Practical knowledge 2
    Speculative knowledge and theology 3
    A more basic distinction between practical and speculative knowledge 3
Theology Is Speculative Knowledge about Things in Terms of Their Dependence upon the First Cause 7
  Theology and the speculative sciences 7
  Branches of philosophy: the philosophy of nature and metaphysics 9
  Metaphysics: the science of being as being 10
  Metaphysics and theology 17
  Theology and Theodicy 18
  Natural and revealed theology 18
Theological Knowledge Is Achieved by Knowing That there Exists a First Cause, and the Nature and Operation of the First Cause 19

Part One

THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

I · THE EXISTENCE OF GOD NEEDS PROOF 25

The Conflict between Existentialism and Essentialism 25
  Platonic essentialism 26

The Proof Is from Causality 89
  The per se cause 89
  The accidental cause 91
  Summary of per se and accidental causality 92
  The instrumental cause 92
Proof from a Series of Causes 95
  Series of per se and accidental causes 95
  Per se series 96
  Series of accidental causes 98
  Conclusion concerning series 99

VI · THE WAYS TO PROVE GOD'S EXISTENCE 102

The First Way 102
  The statement of the first way 102
  Observation on the first proposition 102
  Observation on the second proposition 103
  Observations on the third proposition 104
  Observations on the conclusion 107
A Summary of Objections 113

VII · THE WAYS TO PROVE GOD'S EXISTENCE 116

The Second and Third Ways 116
  The statement of the second way 116
  Observations on the first proposition 116
  Observations on the second proposition 120
  Observations on the third proposition 123
  The statement of the third way 125
  Observations on the first proposition 125
  Observation on the second proposition 126
  Observation on the third proposition 127
  Observation on the fourth proposition 127

VIII · THE WAYS TO PROVE GOD'S EXISTENCE 129

The Fourth Way 129
  The statement of the fourth way 129
  Observations on the first proposition 129

Observations on the second proposition 130
Observations on the third proposition 130
Variants of the Fourth Way 135
The argument from the essences of things 135
Observations on the arguments from the essence of things 136
The argument from the characteristics of some knowledge 136
The argument from the more or less good 138

IX · THE WAYS TO PROVE GOD'S EXISTENCE 140

The Fifth Way 140
The statement of the fifth way 140
Observations on the first proposition 140
Observations on the second proposition 144
Observation on the conclusion 146
General observations on the proof 146

X · FURTHER CLARIFICATION OF THE PROOF 153

The proof from an accidental series of causes 153
What caused causes cause 154
Men think there is a God 154
How God is named being 155
Other proofs of God 157

Part Two

THE NAMES OF GOD

XI · HOW GOD IS NAMED 165

Connection of Part Two with Part One 165
The possibility of naming God 165
Names common to God and creatures are names of analogues 166
The Analogue 166
Total abstraction 166

Formal abstraction of being 168
Summary of both abstractions 169
The analogue of proper proportionality and the analogue of attribution 171
Mixed cases of analogy 173
Res et modus 174
The way of causality, of negation, of eminence 176
Quia est and *Quid est* 177
Summary 178

XII · THE FIRST NAME OF GOD: HE WHO IS 180

Why God is named "He Who Is" 180
Via negationis 180
The Secondary Names or Attributes of God 183
The order of discussion 183
Entitative attributes 184
God is perfect 184
God is good 186
God is infinite 187
God is omnipresent 188
God is immutable 189
God is eternal 189
God is one 189

XIII THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD 193

Operative attributes 193
Immanent Operation of God 193
What knowledge is 193
What God's knowledge is 197
What God knows 199
God knows everything which is distinct from Himself 200
God knows nonexistents 201
God knows future contingents 201

XIV · THE WILL OF GOD 209

What Will Is 209
The determinants of operation 209

  The determinants of rational operation 209
  Will and nature 210
  The relation of will as will to will as nature 211
  Appetite is a transcendental relation 212
  The nature of the relation of appetite to the good 212
  Operation itself 213
Characteristics of Love 214
  A first characteristic of love 214
  A second characteristic 215
  A third characteristic 215
Summary 216
The Will of God 216
  God wills 216
  What God's will is 217
  What God wills 218
  How God's love is exercised 220
Summary 221

XV · THE VIRTUALLY TRANSITIVE ACTION OF GOD 224

  The notion of creation 224
  Proof of creation 226
  God alone creates 227
  The especial difficulty against creation 227
  Attempted solutions of the difficulty 229
  Historical clarification 232
    Socrates and Plato 232
    Aristotle 233
    Christianity 236
    Neoplatonism 237
    Avicenna 238
    Christian solutions 240
    St. Thomas Aquinas 241
Summary 246

XVI · THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD 249

The Notion of Providence 249
  Providence is practical knowledge 249
  Providence and chance 251

Providence and evil 252
  Physical evil 252
  Physical evil in a moral agent 254
  Moral evil and providence 255
  The causality of sin 255
Providence and necessity 256

CONCLUSION 260

APPENDIX 273

BIBLIOGRAPHY 278

INDEX 291

NATURAL THEOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

Theology is knowledge about the First Cause of whatsoever has existence. The following points may serve to clarify that definition. (1) Theology is speculative knowledge. (2) Theology is speculative knowledge about things in terms of their dependence upon the First Cause. (3) Knowledge about things in terms of their dependence upon the First Cause is achieved by knowing (a) that there exists a First Cause, (b) the nature and operation of the First Cause.

Theology Is Speculative Knowledge[1]

THE MEANING OF KNOWLEDGE

All knowledge is a proper account (*recta ratio*) of something. A proper account, for example, of a man's stumbling can be that he was pushed; of water, that it is H_2O; of how to summon the fire department, that you must push down the lever and then let it go.

An account is proper when it is achieved, and an achieved account is one which achieves the purpose of knowing. The purpose of knowing may or may not coincide with the purpose of the one who knows. Thus, one who studies geometry in order to get a degree may achieve geometrical knowledge—this is the purpose of his knowing, without getting his degree—this is the purpose of the one who knows; nor is it unknown that degrees are conferred upon those who do not know geometry. Thus, the purpose of knowing geometry may not be achieved, whereas the purpose of the knower is achieved. One achieves the purpose of knowing geometry by knowing geometry, the purpose of knowing astronomy by knowing astronomy, and so on. One's own private purpose in knowing a subject is irrelevant to the purpose of knowing that subject. Just so, nutrition achieves the purpose of eating, although a man can eat in order to pass the time, to stuff himself, and the like. The distinction between the purpose of knowing, which when secured achieves knowledge, and the purpose of the one who knows, which may or may not coincide with, and so may or may not achieve, the purpose of knowing, may be handily fixed by the phrases: the purpose or end of the work and the purpose or end of the worker (*finis operis*, *finis operantis*). The end of a work is that end which the work or operation is calculated to attain: thus, nourishment is the end of the operation of eating. The end of the worker is that end which he may fix for himself: thus, a man can eat to pass the time. A proper account, accordingly, which achieves the purpose of knowing is an account which answers the question asked. It is not an account of the private and personal reason why one has studied a question.

---

[1] For a fuller explanation of speculative and practical knowledge see St. Thomas Aquinas, *In Boet. de Trin.*, V, 1; John of St. Thomas, *Cursus Philosophicus*, t. I, *Ars Logica*, Pars II, q. 1, a. 4; ed. Reiser, pp. 269 sqq.; *Cursus Theologicus*, t. I, Pars I, q. 1, disp. 2, a. 10; ed. Solesmes, nn. 4–5, pp. 395–396.

The purpose of knowing is achieved in either of two ways: by knowing how to make or to do something; by knowing what is true about something. Knowing how to make or to do something is practical knowledge, for example, knowing how to make speeches, buildings, poems, is practical knowledge.

¶ *Practical knowledge.* Of practical knowledges there are many sorts, distinguished mainly into two classes: proper accounts of creditable performance or of how to do things (*recta ratio agibilium*), and proper accounts of how to make things (*recta ratio factibilium*). The reason for the distinction is as follows: Sometimes we turn one thing into another thing. For example, we turn iron ore into steel. This is making. Sometimes we perform, that is, think, choose, act. Observe, when we perform or act we do not turn one thing into another; performance is not turned into performance; performance *is* performance. This is doing or acting, not making. Thus, there are proper practical accounts of how to perform creditably and proper accounts of how to make things.

Further divisions of practical knowledge come under one or the other head of creditable performance, or recipes for good artifacts. These further divisions depend in each case upon what is to be done or made. Thus, there is a proper account of how to think easily, correctly, and in an orderly manner; this is logic. A proper account of good and bad moral choices is ethics. Accounts of how to make useful things are the technical arts, and the fine arts prescribe how to make beautiful things. Many other kinds of practical knowledge subdivide the above headings.

¶ *Speculative knowledge and theology.* Theology is not practical knowledge. It gives no account of how to make or to do anything. Rather it accounts properly for what is already done, "ready-made" so to say. Theology is a speculative science, and as all speculative sciences, it gives the lay of the land, states how matters stand, lays out the truth of the matter.

Although the word "speculation" has about it the implication of conjecture, guesswork, opinion, nevertheless there is nothing conjectural, no guesswork about speculative knowledge. *Two times two is four* is a speculative statement. True, there may be speculative opinions and conjectures, but these are not yet knowledge. Speculative knowledge accounts properly for what is over against one, for what is there to be seen. Hence its name, speculative, from *speculor*, I look at. The purpose of speculative knowing is achieved by knowing what is there; speculative knowledge has no axe to grind, it makes nothing. There are no rules for speculative knowing except, perhaps, this rule: keep your eyes peeled. Either one knows speculatively that twice two is four, and he knows it as well as the next man, or he does not know it at all. Speculative knowledge is a proper account of what can be seen (*recta ratio speculabilium*) if you look at it.

¶ *A more basic distinction between practical and speculative knowledge.* A more profound statement of the reason for the of the good and the true in practical knowledge: we accept the good according as we understand or specify the good; we understand or specify the good according as we wish to accept whatever we understand as good. On this count, choosing follows knowing in practical knowledge up to the point where there is no question of choosing at all, and at that point we are all alike inasmuch as we wish the good, whatever the good may turn out to be. This is the starting point, the first principle of practical knowledge, the willing of the good. Below that starting point of practical knowledge there is a primacy of knowing over choosing: we choose what, all things considered, we think to be good. Practical knowledge is not anti-intellectual. As between the first principles of willing and knowing, however, it is clear that we wish to act according to specifications, because we first wish to do whatever we may secondly see is good. This is the primacy of the good over the true in practical knowledge. It is a primacy of the first principle, the good, of practical knowledge over a secondary principle, the true, of practical knowledge; it is not a primacy of practical over speculative knowledge.

To resume, knowledge is an achieved account of anything. Achieved accounts fulfill the purpose of knowing which is twofold: to know what is the truth of the matter; to know how to make something, or how to perform creditably. Speculative knowledge is knowledge of what is true. Practical knowledge is knowledge about how to make something, or how to perform creditably. Within practical knowledge there is also involved speculative, *i.e.*, there are reasons why artifacts are well made and why performance is creditable; but those are reasons which specify the good which, first of all, we wish. Theology is speculative knowledge.

Theology Is Speculative Knowledge about Things in Terms of Their Dependence upon the First Cause

THEOLOGY AND THE SPECULATIVE SCIENCES

The location of theology among the speculative sciences must now be fixed.[3] Different speculative sciences are sometimes concerned with different domains: geology is the science of the earth, and astronomy deals with heavenly bodies. Sometimes different speculative sciences deal with the same domain: geology, chemistry, physics, astronomy, all deal in a way with material things. To maintain a distinction, therefore, of one speculative science from another it is necessary to distinguish not their domains, which are sometimes the same, but the way in which each science deals with its domain. The way a science deals with its domain, otherwise known as the formal object of a science, is the terms in which it gives its account.

Thus, an account of things may be given in terms of what they feel like: how they taste, look, sound, their odor, their hardness, softness, etc. For example, an account of man in terms of what he feels like might be this: man is a mammalian primate. Observe man's skeletal structure, the milk glands, the milk—a mammalian primate, without doubt, in terms of what man feels like. Accounts given in such terms are said to be accounts within the first order of abstraction.

There are other terms in which things can be accounted for. Instead of accounting for the objects on a beach in such terms as, say, primates, tall, swarthy, and so on, one might account for them in these terms: they are ten. Ten is a number, a measure of divided quantities. Whatever else those things out on the beach may feel like, they are ten separate units. Besides numbers there are measures of undivided or continuous quantities: lines, planes, solids. In terms of these latter measures ten primates can be roughly accounted for as, say, cylindroids. Accounts of things in terms of how much they are, or how many, are said to be within the second order of abstraction. These accounts are the mathematical sciences.

---

[3] For fuller treatment of the distinction of knowledges see J. Maritain, *Distinguer pour unir, ou les degrés du savoir* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1932), Chs. IV–V.

Lastly, a proper account of things may be given in terms of their being. To explain, let *x* be a being. Let a being be anything which exists or can exist. Let *x* be now described accurately, if not fully, in measurable and sensible terms as follows: *x* is one (arithmetical account), spoonful (geometric account) of gritty, acrid salt (physical account). It is not easy at first to see in what terms, other than more of the same, an account of *x* as a being could possibly be given. Observe, however, that to say *x is abcde*, and to say further that *abcde* is the only possible description of *x* as of something which exists or can exist, this is to say not only that *x is abcde*—a true statement; this is also to say that a thing which exists or can exist must be *abcde*—a false statement.

To see this point one must make an effort, like the effort of one who has always seen black on white, suddenly, to see white on black. Used as we are, and rightly, to accounting for *x*'s in sensible and measurable terms, we must raise our sight to see that if such accounts are the only descriptions of being as being which we can give, we are committed to a vast amount of nonsense.

Let us see this more closely. Let it be true that *x* is *abcde*. This cannot be the description of *x* in terms of its being. If it were, *y*, since it is also a being, should also be *abcde*. But *y* is not *abcde*. So also should another *x*, since it also is *abcde*, be identical with the first *x;* but it is not. It is another *x*. So also should *x* itself, when it ceases to be any one or all of its given predicates, as it may, cease partly or wholly to be a being; yet *x* itself breaks down and changes without, for all that, turning into a part being or into no being at all. Stuff the symbols with content and the point becomes clearer. If these terms, *one*, *hairy*, *ape*, suffice to describe that being in terms of its being something which exists or can exist, then all things, since they too exist or can exist, should be *one*, *hairy*, *ape*. And even were we to suppose that all things which exist are hairy apes, nevertheless, there would be more than one of them. Indeed, even if all things which exist were just one of that species, nevertheless, you could cut that one in half and have two beings, neither of which is an ape at all. Not any more. To such nonsense we should be committed if we supposed that the only account we can give of things is in terms of what they feel like and how much or many they are.

All things are alike in terms of being something which exists or can exist, yet no one being is another. This raises the question, what is it to be a being? Only the question is relevant here. The answer to it is philosophy.

BRANCHES OF PHILOSOPHY: THE PHILOSOPHY OF NATURE AND METAPHYSICS

Philosophy has two main branches, the Philosophy of Nature and First Philosophy, or Metaphysics. The Philosophy of Nature investigates the problem: What is it for the sensible and mobile to be a being? Observe, the question is not, what is it for being to be sensible and mobile? To be sensible is to be hot or cold or sour or soft, etc. These answers are from the physical sciences. The question rather is, what is it for the sensible and mobile to be a being? Proper accounts of the sensible and mobile in terms of their being are the Philosophy of Nature. The domain or material object of the Philosophy of Nature, thus, includes everything sensible and mobile; the terms in which the Philosophy of Nature accounts for its domain are the sensible and mobile as being. These terms are the formal object of the Philosophy of Nature.

First Philosophy, or Metaphysics, investigates the problem: What is it to be a being? Whether the being in question be only sometimes, or never, sensible and mobile is irrelevant to Metaphysics. Substance, for example, is only sometimes sensible—through its accidents (fat man); so also is a unit (one man) only sometimes sensible. The substance of God is never sensible, nor are all units sensible, *e.g.*, the unit number ten, or the unit idea of a man. The formal object of Metaphysics, or the terms in which it gives its account, is being as being.

METAPHYSICS: THE SCIENCE OF BEING AS BEING

In the expression "being as be-ing," the first "being" is a noun and means the subject of existence. The second "be-ing" is a participle and means the actual or possible exercise of the act of existing. Unfortunately, there are not two different words in English to name these two factors of being: (1) the subject of existence, and (2) its actual or possible existence. We have, indeed, two words in "runner" and "running" which indicate the difference between the one who runs and the operation of his running, but "being" and "be-ing" sound the same. The hyphen in the second word "be-ing" may help to bring out the difference between (1) a subject which does or can exist, and (2) its existence, its "ising," actual or possible, although it would be pedantic always to hyphenate the word. Indeed, since one venture in coining a word has already been made, another may well be risked: the formal object of Metaphysics is the "ising," actual or possible, of "isers." To account properly for "isers" in terms of their actual or possible "ising" is Metaphysics.

At this point and in order to explain where Theology fits into Metaphysics we must discourse somewhat upon being as being. The discourse is not meant to prejudice any metaphysical issue. All metaphysical issues will be argued in their proper places. Here we assume the argument as over and done, and concern ourselves with this precise question: At what point in the field of metaphysics do we find ourselves talking about God? Thus we may discover at what point Metaphysics turns to the search of the First Cause of being and becomes at that point a Theology.

Starting from the data of sensation, seeing colors, hearing sounds, and so on, we formulate in the unity of our human knowledge, by which we feel what we know and know what we feel, such propositions as *it is hot*, *it is cold*, etc. These are propositions in the first order of abstraction and are the physical sciences. We also form mathematical propositions, which are in the second order of abstraction and are connected with sensation through the medium of common intelligible matter, which is connected with common sensible matter, which in turn is connected with singular sensible matter. Complicated as physical and mathematical propositions may become, and certain ones are formidable in detail, they all involve an undisclosed factor which we assume without examination, until we come to the third order of abstraction, Metaphysics. That factor is the act of existing, actual or possible, of whatever else the subjects of that act of existing may be. For example, sulphuric acid is H_2SO_4. Here we have two factors: (1) the subject of the act of existing, sulphuric acid, whose sensible properties and their mathematical relations are symbolized by the formula H_2SO_4; (2) the act of existing of that subject. The case is the same for everything else. There are two factors in everything we experience which exists or can exist: the subject of existence, and its actual or possible existence.

First of all, it is self-evident that there must be a subject of the act of existing, which subject is that which exists or can exist. To assume that there is or can be an act of existing, and to assume further that there is no subject of that act of existing, is to assume that nothing is or can be. The reason is this: without such a subject there would be nothing (no "isers") to which the act of existing ("ising") attaches or can attach itself. This is a contradiction in terms. This is what is meant by the unity of being as being: it is the "togetherness" or indivision of a subject of existence and its actual or possible act of existence. Obviously, if there are existents, they must be somethings which exist or can exist; it is not "nothing" which is or can be.

Secondly, in our experience of being it is clear (1) that one being or one subject of existence is not another: this man is not that man; (2) that within any one experienced being, say within any one man, the subject of existence is not identical with its act of existing. Since point (1) is obvious, let us first see what point (2) means, and next why it is so.

To say that the subject of existence, in our experience, is not identical with its act of existing is to say that a man, for example, is not an existent because he is a man. The same applies to other experienced beings: none of them exists because it is a subject of existence. Why is this so? What is there in our experience of being which makes it impossible to identify subjects of existence with their act of existing? There is, first, change: a man is sad, then he is glad; ignorant, and later wiser. Now, if "be-ing" is identical with "the one who is ignorant" (the subject of be-ing ignorant), it follows that be-ing is identically the one who is ignorant. This is impossible if there be change, if the one who is ignorant becomes wise. Impossible, because the act of existing, identified by hypothesis with the one who is ignorant, cannot then stretch far enough to cover the same one who is wise when he becomes wise. The act of existing is all used up by its identity with the one who is ignorant. Being wise would not be being at all. This our experience cannot admit. Secondly, there is generation and corruption: in our experience, things change not only in their accidentals—their color, shape, place, etc.,—they also change somehow in their essentials: green grass when eaten by a red cow turns partly into the cow, partly into yellow butter, partly into white milk, and after that each factor may turn up as heaven knows what. "They say the owl was a baker's daughter. . . ." The dialectic is the same as for accidental change: if be-ing is identically grass (the subject of being), it follows that be-ing is that which is grass. Impossible, because be-ing, identified by hypothesis with that which is grass, would be utterly exhausted in being grass, and being a cow wouldn't be being at all, nor would being milk, butter, etc. There is this difference between the two cases of accidental and substantial change: in accidental change the subject of being is not changed in its nature; in substantial change the subject of being is changed in its nature. In either case, however, be-ing is not identified with the subject of being, whether that subject be a kind of being (cow, grass) or a qualified being (wise man). Subjects of being are not in our experience identical with their act of existing.

We must conclude, then, that (1) one being is not another; (2) within any one being in our experience the subject of be-ing is not identified with its be-ing. This is what the plurality of being means. To have plurality we must have at least twoness. There is twoness when one being is not another, and both are being; there is also twoness when a subject of being is not its being. In this last case the twoness is not the twoness of two beings but the twoness of two factors of one being.[4]

It should be apparent by now that being as being is one. The reason is this: the subject of being is not divided from its being, and the reason for that is that if the subject of being were divided from its act of being, there would be no thing, no subject, which exists or can exist. It should also be apparent that being as being in our experience is many or plural, on two counts: first, one being is not another, and both are beings; second, within any one experienced being the factor of the subject of existence is not the factor of its existing.

At this point we may open a parenthesis for the sake of clarity. So far the description has been of being as being, not of our knowledge of being as being. Obviously, the unity and plurality of being as being has its repercussion upon our knowledge of being as being. The ontological unity and plurality of being turns up in our knowledge of being as being as transcendental and analogical knowledge. Transcendental knowledge is knowledge of all things in those terms in which all things are one and many, for example, "that which is or can be" are terms in which every being is alike (one) and different (many). Analogical knowledge of being is knowledge of one being in such terms as are proportioned to the knowledge of another being, *e.g.*, the knowledge *John exists* is proportioned to the knowledge that *George exists*. This is not the place to expand the above points. They are mentioned only in order to keep the discussion focused, not upon our knowledge of being as being, but upon being as being.

Granted now that being as being in our experience is one and many, granted, that is, that there are many "isers ising," it is not self-evident why there are many beings. True, there are many beings; true also, many beings are many. It is not, however, *because* of plurality or manyness that there are many beings. Hence, the reason why there are many beings is not self-evident.

The point needs to be made clear. We cannot find in the fact that there are many things any reason why those things exist or can exist. We all know that the answer to such a question as "Why are there so many deaths this year?" cannot be "Because there are many deaths." That answer is like the one given by a flustered motorist to an irate policeman who wished to know "Why do you toot your horn?" "I always toot," was the motorist's answer. A true statement, no doubt, but not an answer to the question. It is not the fact that there are many toots which tells us why there are many toots. It is the same with being; it is not the fact that there are many beings which tells us why there are many beings.

---

[4] For a metaphysical discussion of other types of plurality see F.-X. Maquart, *Elementa Philosophiae*, t. III, p. 1, *Metaphysica* (Parisiis: A. Blot, 1938), pp. 53 sqq.

Indeed, if the explanation of the act of existing lay in plurality, we should run into an impossible situation. Recall our two types of plurality: (1) individual *a* and individual *b;* (2) the subject of being and its act of being. To say that the act of existing finds its explanation in there being (1) *both* individuals, or in there being (2) *both* a subject of being and its being, is the same as to say that the act of existing is identified (1) with individuals *a* and *b*, and (2) with each subject of being. Now that is impossible (1) if *a* and *b* are *different* individuals, and (2) if the subjects of being *vary*. Why is it impossible? It is impossible first because the act of existing, identified by hypothesis with *a* and *b*, would swamp either *a* or *b*. Grant that the act of existing is identically *a*, grant also that the act of existing is identically *b;* you have granted that *a* is *b*. But *a* is not *b*. Whence, it is impossible to identify being with a plurality of individuals. The case is the same with subjects of being and their being. In this case, the impossibility of identifying a subject of being with its act of existing arises, as we have seen,[5] from the impossibility of a difference, substantial or accidental, being identically the subject of that difference. For, if differences were identically the subjects of them, these subjects could not change, substantially or accidentally, and still be the same subjects of difference. Yet, subjects of difference both change and remain withal subjects of difference.

It is not the plurality of being which is in question. Plurality is a fact given in experience. It is the act of existing of things, an act of existing which is not self-evident precisely because it is manifold—

[5] See pp. 11–13.

that is in question; and the question is, why is being manifold? Existing would raise no question at all unless it were manifold. An act of existing which is not the act of existing of many individuals or of many kinds of individuals raises no special intellectual difficulty. There is no answer to the question, Why is being being? any more than there is an answer to the question, Why is the hot hot? All we can say to such pseudo-questions is to point out that just as it is the nature of the hot to be hot, so it is the nature of being to be. A question arises, however, when many different individuals and many different kinds of individuals exist or can exist, and the question arises precisely because of the plurality of being. It is the manifoldness of things which forces us to ask, why do they exist, why can they exist? *John is, George is, water is* H_2O, *men are vertebrates,* the plurality of individuals and the variety of natures represented by these statements makes us ask, Why is "existing" all that and much more? To say that "existing" is identically one of the above subjects makes it impossible to say that it is another. To answer that "existing" is identically all of them makes it impossible to say that being is many. To answer that there is no answer at all is to say that being is many, and yet, in default of a reason why it is many, that it is not many. To recur to the example of "the hot," it is not the fact that hot is hot which raises any question, any more than it is the fact that being is being which raises any question. It is rather the fact that there are many hot things which raises the question of *why* there are many hot things. Just so, it is the fact that there are many things which exist or can exist which raises the question, why do they exist, why can they exist?

The traditional answer to that question is that plurality is caused: the many are made to be. It is the right answer. Many beings cannot file past us without interrogation as to their origin. Origin they must have, else they are not many. For consider: plurality means difference. Now difference is not nothing. Difference is being. If, therefore, difference did not come from being, it would not come at all. Now, if difference did not come at all, there would be no differences at all. Thus it is that plurality must originate, else there is no plurality. Origin here means no more and no less than a cause, a reason why there are many beings. Fire causes something to be hot, cold causes something to be cold, parents cause the generation of their progeny, bad food causes indigestion and, in general, consequents are due to some antecedents.

Once having admitted that plurality is caused, the metaphysician cannot stop there. He cannot let the matter rest at saying that one chicken comes from another, that beings come from being. If that were all there were to it, we would be confronted with this situation: many beings are admittedly caused to be many; but there being no cause which is not itself caused, we are left without a first cause of many beings. This is equivalent to saying that we are left without any cause of being. Admitting that many are made to be, you must admit that there is an uncaused cause of being; because any caused cause is at once convicted of not being the cause of being.[6] Since, however, it was admitted that there is a cause of being, there must be an uncaused, a first, cause of being.

Contained in that last paragraph is the point at which Metaphysics terminates in Theology, the spot where the metaphysician begins to talk of God. Once a metaphysician has seen that many beings have a cause of their being many, it dawns upon him that not all beings can be caused. He reasons thus: If all beings had a cause, not a single one would really be, because not a single one would, since *it* is caused, be truly a cause of being: now without a cause of many beings, there cannot be many beings. There must, therefore, be an uncaused cause of beings in order that there be a cause of beings. Put the matter thus: admit there is a cause of multiple being; admit that *all* causes of multiple being are themselves caused; you have admitted, in admitting *only* caused causes of being, that there is no cause of multiple being. A contradiction in terms. In order to avoid this contradiction and to retain the necessary principle that multiple being is caused to be, one must admit that a cause of being cannot itself be caused but must be an uncaused or first cause of being.

As was remarked, the above discourse has not been for the purpose of arguing the matter. Our concern has rather been to fix the place in Metaphysics where, having seen that the many are caused, the metaphysician sees that if *every* being is caused, there really is not *any* cause of many beings, and that, he has seen, is impossible. Here we have two insights: (1) multiple being is caused, (2) since it is contradictory to say that a being whose own act of existing is caused is itself a cause of being, there must be an uncaused cause of being. Insight (2) is a continuation of insight (1): by insight (1) a metaphysician, seeking to know being as being, finds that multiple being in order to be multiple must be caused. By insight (2) a metaphysician finds that a cause of being cannot itself be caused but must be uncaused.

---

[6] To see what a caused cause does cause, if not being, cf. p. 154.

METAPHYSICS AND THEOLOGY

These things being so, it becomes quite impossible to speak of Theology as though it were a speculative science specifically distinct from Metaphysics. Sciences are distinguished by a specific difference of their formal object, which is the terms in which they account for their domain. Plainly, Theology is accounting for its domain, all things, in terms of being, viz., uncaused being. True, the knowledge that multiple being has an uncaused cause of it is not knowledge of that uncaused cause as it is in itself—if it were, Theology would be specifically distinct from Metaphysics. The knowledge that multiple being has an uncaused cause is rather knowledge about beings as dependent upon a First Cause. Theology knows God as the First Cause of being; it is not the Beatific Vision.

If Theology is not specifically distinct from Metaphysics, why call it Theology, why not call it Metaphysics? First of all it can be called Metaphysics, that is, a continuation of Metaphysics. Secondly, a continuation of a science must have a special name: one section of a road is not another, though both are sections of the same road. Besides, an important section merits its own name. We must, accordingly, have a name to indicate that knowledge which, metaphysical throughout, is found at a certain point to be knowledge of a first cause. That knowledge is theological knowledge or Theology.

THEOLOGY AND THEODICY

Theology has often been called after Leibniz Theodicy, from θεοῦ δίκη.[7] Theodicy means the vindication of God, that is, the vindication of God's goodness and justice towards man. It is an objectionable name. God's ways to man are not hailed before the bar of human reason; they need no justification. Moreover, that part of Theology which deals with the providence of God is not the whole of Theology.

NATURAL AND REVEALED THEOLOGY

Theology is often called Natural Theology in order to distinguish it from Revealed Theology. Natural Theology is the knowledge about God in the light of human reason. Revealed Theology is knowledge about God which is illuminated by the light of supernatural Faith. The distinction is valid as between Natural and Revealed Theology. However, to call Natural Theology the knowledge about God in the light of human reason seems to distinguish it from Metaphysics, as if Natural Theology knew about God whereas Metaphysics did not. This is not so. To speak of Natural Theology is to distinguish it from Revealed Theology. To speak simply of Theology is to name a speculative science about things in terms of their dependence upon the First Cause. If one who hears the name, Theology, does not know which is meant, Natural or Revealed Theology, that is the fault of a writer who has not made it clear that Theology is a continuation of Metaphysics and that Natural Theology names the same science as Metaphysics but as distinguished from Revealed Theology.

---

[7] Leibniz, *Essai de Théodicée sur la bonté de Dieu, la liberté de l'homme et l'origine du mal* (Amsterdam, 1710).

Theological Knowledge Is Achieved by Knowing (a) That There Exists a First Cause, and (b) The Nature and Operation of the First Cause

The content or achievement of theological knowledge lies in knowing, first, that God exists. Theological knowledge finds its achievement, secondly, in knowing the nature of God.

A bystander watching a construction gang moving huge beams of steel with a derrick, calculated suddenly and correctly that one inch more on the angle of the derrick would tip it, its load, and its platform. He informed the gang's foreman of the danger. The foreman thanked him, said that he too knew of the danger, but was guarding against it. Then the foreman asked: "Listen, who *are* you?" Of course it was not simply the pronunciation of the bystander's name which the foreman wished to know. Rather he wished to know what it was in that bystander which would explain his extraordinary calculation. What was there about that man which explained how he knew what was up? That, if it could be stated, would more truly name the man than any John Doe. We are confronted with a situation similar to the foreman's. We should like to know what there is about God which explains what He has done. We should like to know His Name. No one statement will do; indeed one statement will do far less for God than for a man. There are many Names of God. All of them, however, follow a certain order which is dictated by the way those Names hang together in our conception. For example, we conceive God as a Creator before we can conceive that He keeps in existence the things He has created.

This book, then, will attempt to achieve two knowledges: the knowledge that God exists, and the knowledge of His Names.

Suggested Reading

Speculative and practical knowledge:

Aristotle, *Nic. Ethics*, VI, 2.

St. Thomas Aquinas, *In Boet. de Trin.*, V, 1; *In Ethic.*, VI, lect. 2; *Contra Gentiles*, III, 75; *Sum. Theol.*, I, 14, 16; I, 79, 11; *De Verit.*, III, 3; XXII, 10.

John of St. Thomas, *Cursus Philosophicus*, t. I; *Ars Logica*, Pars II, q. 1, a. 4; ed. Reiser, pp. 269 sqq.; *Cursus Theologicus*, t. I, Pars I, q. 1, disp. 2, a. 10; ed. Solesmes, nn. 4–5, pp. 395–396.

De Tonquédec, J., S.J., *La critique de la connaissance*, Ch. I.

Maritain, J., *Distinguer pour unir, ou les degrés du savoir*, Chs. IV–V; *The Degrees of Knowledge*, Chs. III–IV; *Réflexions sur l'intelligence et sur sa vie propre*, Chs. I, II, IX; *Science et sagesse*, pp. 107–112; *De la philosophie chrétienne*, Notes, II.

Thiry, L., *Speculativum-practicum secundum S. Thomam, quo modo se habeant in actu humano.*

The division of the sciences: the three degrees of abstraction:

Aristotle, *Metaph.*, VI, 1; XII, 2–3.

St. Thomas Aquinas, *In Boet. de Trin.*, V, 1–3; VI, 2; *In Phys.*, I, lect. 1, nn. 2–3; *In Metaph.*, Prooemium; *Sum. Theol.*, I, 85, 1, ad 1–2.

Maritain, J., *Distinguer pour unir, ou les degrés du savoir*, Chs. IV–V; *The Degrees of Knowledge*, Chs. III–IV; *Réflexions sur l'intelligence*, Chs. VI–VII; *La philosophie de la nature*, Ch. I.

Regis, L.-M., O.P., "La philosophie de la nature," *Philosophie*, I, pp. 127–156.

Simon, Y., *Introduction à l'ontologie du connaître de la connaissance*, Ch. III; *Prévoir et savoir*, pp. 147–154.

The nature of metaphysics:

Aristotle, *Metaph.*, IV, 1–2.

St. Thomas Aquinas, *In Metaph.*, IV, lect. 1–2; *Contra Gentiles*, I, 1.

De Raeymaeker, L., *Philosophie de l'être*, Sec. I, Ch. I.

Gilson, E., *The Spirit of Mediaeval Philosophy*, Chs. I–II; *The Unity of Philosophical Experience*, Ch. XII; *L'être et l'essence*, Ch. III; *Being and Some Philosophers*, Ch. I.

Maréchal, J., S.J., *Le point de départ de la métaphysique*, Vol. V, Book II, sec. I–II.

Maritain, J., *Distinguer pour unir, ou les degrés du savoir*, Ch. I; *The Degrees of Knowledge*, Ch. I; *Sept leçons sur l'être, Première Leçon; Existence and the Existent*, Chs. I, III.

Paulus, J., *Henri de Gand. Essai sur les tendances de sa métaphysique*, Ch. I.

Robert, J.-D., O.P., "La métaphysique, science distincte de toute autre discipline philosophique, selon saint Thomas d'Aquin," *Divus Thomas Plac.*, Vol. L, nn. 3–4, pp. 206–222.

Simon, Y., *Prévoir et savoir*, pp. 143–154.

The place of theology in metaphysics:

Aristotle, *Metaph.*, I, 2; VI, 1.

St. Thomas Aquinas, *In II Sent.*, Prolog.; *In Post. Analy.*, I, lect. 4; *In Metaph.*, Prooemium; *Contra Gentiles*, I, 1–4; III, 25; *Sum Theol.*, I, 1, 2–4; I, 1, 6; II–II, 9, 2.

Gilson, E., *Le Thomisme*, Introduction; *Christianity and Philosophy*, Chs. I, III, IV; *God and Philosophy*, Ch. II; *Reason and Revelation in the Middle Ages; The Spirit of Mediaeval Philosophy*, Chs. III–IV.

Journet, C., *Introduction à la théologie*, pp. 73–76; 82–112; 117–153.

Maritain, J., *Science and Wisdom*, pp. 3–33; 70–107. *De la philosophie chrétienne*, Chs. III–IV; Notes, II.

Mascall, E. L., *Existence and Analogy*, Ch. I.

Natural and revealed theology:

St. Thomas Aquinas, *In Boet. de Trin.*, V, 4; *Contra Gentiles*, I, 4–7; II, 2–4; *Sum. Theol.* I, 1, 1; I, 1, 6; I, 1, 10; II–II, 1, 5; *De Verit.*, XIV, 9–10.

Bonnefoy, J., O.F.M., *La nature de la théologie selon saint Thomas d'Aquin*, pp. 1–20.

Chenu, M.-D., O.P., "La théologie comme science au XIII^e siècle," *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du moyen âge*, pp. 31–71.

Gagnebet, R., O.P., "La nature de la théologie speculative," *Revue Thomiste*, XLIV, pp. 1–39; 213–225; 645–674.

Gilson, E., *Le Thomisme*, Introduction and Ch. VI; *The Spirit of Mediaeval Philosophy*, Chs. I–II.

Journet, C., *Introduction à la théologie*, pp. 38–43; 263–306.

Synave, P., O.P., "La révélation des verités divines naturelles d'après s. Thomas d'Aquin," *Mélanges Mandonnet*, t. I, pp. 327–370.

Webb, C., *Studies in the History of Natural Theology*, pp. 1–83.

Part One

THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

I · THE EXISTENCE OF GOD NEEDS PROOF

The Conflict Between Existentialism and Essentialism

The existence of God either cannot be proved, or it can be, or it does not need to be proved. Since these are the only logical alternatives possible, it is not surprising that they have all found favor at one time or another in history. The contention that the existence of God cannot be proved will not be discussed directly at present. Directly our concern is with the last two alternatives: either the existence of God can be proved or it needs no proof.

If God's existence be evident, it obviously needs no proof. Assume, now, two men, both of whom admit the proposition *God exists*. One man maintains that the proposition needs no proof; the other that it does. Plainly, they immediately disagree only over what requires proof and what does not. Yet that disagreement arises from a more fundamental one: a disagreement over the nature of knowledge. And that last disagreement arises from a still more fundamental question: what is the nature of being? Disagreement as to when proof is required and when it is not necessarily involves disagreement over what is required in order to know. Disagreement over what is required in order to know involves disagreement over what it is to be, because knowledge is of being. So far as can be ascertained, no one in his senses denies that his knowledge is of being. Thus, it is to a dispute over what things are in terms of their being that all disputes are traced. What seems to be a disagreement only over such a detail as when we must prove and when we need not prove, turns out to be a disagreement over the very nature of knowledge and of being.

In order to settle the issue as to whether or not God's existence must be proved, we must, accordingly, take soundings in Metaphysics. We must determine what it is to be or to exist. As was said, no one denies (whatever be his theory about the nature of knowledge) that his knowledge is of being. To the question, then, what is being? We must give some answer if we are to decide the issue, what is knowledge? No one can decide what knowledge is, or when proved knowledge is necessary and when it is not, unless he first settles what knowledge is about; and no one can settle what knowledge is about unless he settles the original question, what is being?

There are two and, roughly speaking, only two philosophies of being: essentialism and existentialism. We must see what they are and how they affect the epistemological issue which concerns the nature of proof. Then we can decide whether or not God's existence must be proved.

Apart from those who deny the existence of God, all others who talk about Him assume some sort of metaphysics and, consequently, some sort of epistemology. It is this assumption which bears examination.

If we limit ourselves to "pure" positions, there is not a wide range of choice among metaphysical and epistemological doctrines. Metaphysics and epistemology are under either the aegis of Plato or that of Aristotle.

PLATONIC ESSENTIALISM

Let being be described thus: being is fish, or fowl, or whatever else may be correctly defined. Such a description of being may be conveniently called an essentialist description, because essences are definable, and being is in the present hypothesis an essence.

Essentialism develops as an answer to the question which worried the hippopotamus:

> A worried hippopotamus reflected with a sigh,
> How very strange that two of us make hippopotami,

> But if the hippopotami, how stands the matter thus
> That any hippopotami are hippopotamus?

The hippo's worry is twofold: first, why is the same essence-being, *hippopotamus,* two individuals? Secondly, why are the two individual hippopotami the same essence-being, *hippopotamus?*

THE ARGUMENT AGAINST PLATONIC ESSENTIALISM

It can be said straight off that if to be is to be an essence, there is no answer to the hippo's two worries. Take his first worry, why is the same essence-being, *hippopotamus,* two individuals? That question cannot be answered, precisely because, upon the assumption that to be is to be a hippopotamus, there is no definable difference in the *hippopotamus* which both individuals are. Thus, the way from essence-being to individuals is effectively blocked.

Nor can essentialism allay the second of our hippo's worries, why are two hippopotami one essence-being, *hippopotamus?* In fact, far from allaying the hippo's second worry, essentialism will give him something else to worry about. The reason why essentialism cannot say why two hippos are one in being *hippopotamus* is this: even supposing that two individuals are one in essence-being, nevertheless, since the two remain obstinately two, there must be some other essence-being which one hippo is and the other is not. Consider: there is a surplusage, a recognizable surplusage, in one hippo over the other; one hippo has something which the other has not if only because one is not the other. What is that surplus essence? At this point essentialism, by agreeing that there must be some surplus essence, advances a new worry. The reason is: this agreement turns the *hippopotamus* which both hippos by hypothesis are, into a *hippopotamus* plus something else, which only one of them is. And now the question is, how can one unit essence turn out to be two? That is something else for the hippo to worry about. Waving aside his worry over the fact that there are two, essentialism leaves him with a more anxious question, am I even a hippopotamus?[1]

---

[1] In Plato, *Sophistes,* 244a, all this good, clean fun is a desperate matter.

ARISTOTELIAN SUBSTANTIALISM

The simplest answer to the Platonism just described seems to be as follows. Since, upon the Platonic assumption that being is essence, one essence turns out to be at least two, or two individuals turn out to be one, the assumption must be false. Recall the assumption: to be is to be an essence which participates in some other essence outside the thing which exists. Deny that assumption. Lay it down that to be is to be the things which are. If these things which exist turn out also to be definable in terms of essence-being, what of it? At least the location of essences is properly fixed: essences are in, not outside, the things which exist.[2] Upon the score of units, individuals or essences, turning out to be no units at all, there will thus no longer be any difficulty. This was the starting point of Aristotle's "smashing critique" of Platonic forms or essence-beings.

Whatever solution Aristotle may thereafter give to the problem of multiplicity, his solution will at least have the advantage of preserving the unity with which analysis must begin: the unity of individuals, the unity of essence.

Whatever an individual may be, it must, to start with, be an individual. If it is not an individual, we should never have anything which exists or can exist. Rather, we should apparently have several units *in* an individual, of each of which we should have to say that *it*, not the individual, exists or can exist. But this is only an apparent solution, because, upon the Platonic assumption, we could not even say of each unit in the individual that it exists, since each unit would by hypothesis split into more units and these into still more, until not even unit essences could be said to exist, except upon the condition that each be itself plus something else. To come to that point is to say that being is, because it is itself; and is not, because it is something else.[3]

Accordingly, whatever one may say in criticism of Aristotle's destruction of Platonic forms, we must admit that Aristotle at least does not destroy the data, which are units.

[2] Aristotle, *Metaph.*, I, 9, 991a 12.

[3] Cf. Plato, *Sophistes*, 244a–260d.

THE ARGUMENT FOR ARISTOTELIAN SUBSTANTIALISM

The Aristotelian preservation of the data implies, of course, much more. It implies a sound conception of the function of the human intellect. The Platonic intellect has over against it essence-beings. These and only these it knows with certainty. However, since essence-beings are each themselves compounded of more essence-beings, and since these additional essence-beings are as universal as, though of less extension than, the first, there is no trajectory either from essence-being to beings, or from our understanding of essence-being to our understanding of beings. Nor can we know beings in virtue of our knowing only essence-being; thus there is no trajectory from our knowledge of essence-being to our knowledge of beings. Thence it is that the Platonic intellect cannot understand beings and must resign itself to an ignorance of the world in which we live, the world of beings. The world in which nobody to date has ever lived, the world of forms or essence-beings, is the native habitat of Platonic intelligence. Aristotle will have none of it. According to him, we know things, and if what we know of things is known universally, what of it? That can only mean that universals are somehow in things, not as parts of an aggregate, but as that which the things "out there," the things alive and kicking, are. If our understanding of those things is a universal understanding, that obviously means only that our understanding is universal, not that things are universal. In short, the way we understand things, a universal way, is not the things as *they* are, but what we understand of them, *that* the things are.

How is this possible? How may the data, beings and our knowledge of them, be preserved? The question is really two questions. How is it possible that our understanding, which is in terms that *are* universal, be of things which are *not* universal? Secondly, how is it possible that things be in fact individuals, whereas they are multiple in kind, multiple as individuals, multiple in the states of those individuals?

The Aristotelian principles of potency and act answer both questions. On the side of our understanding, those principles issue into the possible and agent intellect; on the side of things they issue into prime matter, substantial form, and a cause of the union of the two. This is not the place to explain these matters. Suffice it to emphasize the way Aristotle's theory preserves the data. Aristotle does not try to argue the many out of Platonic essence. The many, individuals or essences, simply will not be argued out of Platonic forms. Instead of summoning the many from the one by dialectic, Aristotle lays it down that the many are caused to be; caused by substantial forms, plus efficient, final and material causes, in the realm of beings; caused to be known by the agent intellect and sensible things, in the realm of understanding. Since the Platonic travail, which attempts to deliver individual units or essence units from essence-being, proves abortive; since such an attempt, even if successful, would not give us a theology, Plato has given us no theology. Has Aristotle a theology?

THE INCOMPLETENESS OF ARISTOTELIAN SUBSTANTIALISM

Aristotle's explanation of multiplicity presupposes the existence of the units whose multiplicity it explains.[4] Grant Aristotle man A, he will explain how man B puts in an appearance, viz., by being generated. Grant Aristotle a sad man, he will explain how the same man becomes glad, viz., by change. Grant Aristotle the fact of true knowledge, he will explain knowledge as caused by the agent intellect, which renders the sensibles intelligible. Refusing to start with beings, Plato can never reach them. Refusing knowledge any cause within the human intellect—recall his theory of reminiscence, which merely puts off the answer—Plato cannot wind up with any knowledge which is recognizably human. Aristotle begins with the data: beings and our knowledge of them. He then proceeds to explain how we get more beings by generation, and more knowledge by abstraction, reasoning, and judgment. It is a strong position and it can develop into an epistemology on the one hand, and into a metaphysics crowned by a theology on the other. It can, but does it?

[4] Cf. St. Thomas Aquinas, *In Lib. de Causis,* lect. 18.

There is no evidence that the Aristotelian First Mover makes the units to exist. The Aristotelian First Mover makes the units, which exist, to be more units. If essentialism identifies beings with essences, Aristotle is not an essentialist. If, however, essentialism supposes, without explaining, the existence of different units, Aristotle is to that extent an essentialist. Give Aristotle existents and he will explain how they proliferate. How describe such a position? Perhaps it can be described as an incomplete existentialism: an existentialism because it starts with existents; an incomplete existentialism because the First Mover causes only the proliferation of units, not their existence, and when existence is not caused, things must either exist under the pressure of the only intelligible factor there is in them, viz., some essence factor, or else the origin of the existence of things must not be deemed a pertinent question. There is no contradiction in all this. Aristotle simply never asked the question why there are units rather than not. His question was rather why are the units, which are assumed to exist—why are they prolific?

CHRISTIAN EXISTENTIALISM

Christians asked the question, why are there things rather than not? and they asked the question because they were told by revelation that once upon a time there was nothing but God and that He made everything.

At this point Christianity came into philosophy—quite a different statement from saying that philosophy came into Christianity. Christians accepted by their faith the fact of creation. Could they know this also by reason? Could they prove it?

CHRISTIAN ESSENTIALISM: ST. AUGUSTINE

To prove it, Augustine had two resources, his faith that God made the world and his Platonism. Augustine's faith made him aware of creation. His Platonism made him think that to be was to be an essence.[5] Augustine knew quite well that Platonic ideas could not create beings. But if he retouched them, if he changed the Platonic ideas into divine ideas, could they then create beings? Obviously they could, but then they were no longer Platonic ideas. They were the creative ideas of God. The creative ideas of God were now to make beings. What sort of beings? Essence-beings, since for Augustine to be is to be an essence. Here we have on the one hand a divine cause, quite up to the task of creating. On the other hand we have essence-beings, quite below the role they are supposed to play, the role of being created.

---

[5] Cf. E. Gilson, *God and Philosophy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1941), p. 61.

THE ARGUMENT AGAINST AUGUSTINISM

Essence-beings cannot be created either in nature or in human knowledge. It is flatly impossible to make essence-being to exist. God cannot make *animal* to be. He makes this thing, which is an animal, to exist. If indeed one wishes to say that the things which God makes are intelligible, and in that sense God creates essences, that is a comprehensible statement. To say, however, that essence-being—not the things which have essence-being—can exist, this is to say that individuals, which are the only existents possible, are essences. Plainly, individuals are not essences, because individuals are many and their specific and generic essence is one. Moreover, essence-being cannot be put ready-made into human knowledge. If it were so put there, it would be given over to knowledge, and we should have nothing to do with its formation. This is to deny the collaboration of the human agent in its work of knowing. It is nevertheless a fact that what we know depends initially upon what we feel, see, taste, etc., and it is a fact that our sensations depend upon the things sensed. It is impossible that such knowledge, which we collaborate in causing, be caused in us without our collaboration.[6]

Despite that impossibility of squaring the creation of essence-being in nature or in knowledge with the known facts, namely, that only individuals exist and that we co-operate in forming our knowledge, let us nevertheless assume the contrary to both propositions.

---

[6] No doubt God can infuse knowledge, but infused knowledge is by hypothesis not our doing.

Let us assume, first, that essence-being does exist. The result of this assumption is that such being is as helpless to act as it is helpless to exist; because before there is operation there must be something to operate. Unable to exist, essence-being can exercise no causality. It can do nothing. Assume, secondly, that essence-being is created in our knowledge. The result of this assumption is that we exercise no causality in knowledge, because there is nothing for us to do.

Putting the two results together, we see that essentialism is the denial to creatures of causality both in nature and in knowledge. This denial is known as ontologism, and it is the inescapable result of a consistent, "whole-hog," Platonism.

The Effect of Existentialism and Essentialism Upon Proof

ONTOLOGIST PROOF

Let us now see what a "proof" of the existence of God looks like under the manipulation of ontologistic or essentialist assumptions.

An essentialist assumes that our intellect, in order to know, need not first be fecundated by the causal impact of an existent, *maritans sinum cogitationis;* nor does he assume the causality of the agent intellect which makes sensibles intelligible. He assumes that we start with the knowledge of essence-being; then he tries to derive from that knowledge of essence-being whatever knowledge may thereafter be in our heads. For example, he will try to derive from our knowledge of universals our knowledge of singulars; from our knowledge of the possible he will try to derive our knowledge of the actual; the knowledge of the necessary he will make the source of our knowledge of the contingent; from our knowledge of essence he will extort our knowledge of the existent. The knowledge of the universal, of the possible, of the necessary, of the essential; that is all given. It is subsequent knowledge which must be explained. Thus, in essentialism, existential factors are not known *first*, whereas essential factors are known *afterwards;* rather, it is the other way about.

This being so, let us now see how an essentialist integrates with our knowledge of essence-being the knowledge that God exists. The investigation may be limited to the essence-existence relation, because it is there that is generated an essentialist theology. The essence of God is to exist. This we can know. True, our knowledge of essences which are not God does not include a knowledge of their existence. Nor is it relevant that many men do not know that the essence of God is to exist. The point is that one can, and many do, conceive an essence whose nature it is to exist. If such be the knowledge of this one essence, whereas knowledges of other essences do not include the knowledge of their existence, it must needs be that in knowing an essence whose nature it is to exist, we also know that such an essence in effect exists. The "proof" of God's existence is as simple as that, to an essentialist. We know that God exists, because we must conceive an essence, whose nature it is to exist, as in fact existing.

THE ARGUMENT AGAINST ONTOLOGIST PROOF

The matter is not as simple as that to an existentialist. An existentialist assumes as the only valid starting point of knowledge the knowledge of existents. On the side of our knowledge of existents is to be ranged the knowledge of the sensible, the singular, the actual, and the contingent. It is with these knowledges that our knowledge of essence, of the intelligible, of the universal, of the possible and necessary, must be integrated. Existentialism begins with the knowledge of being, and it must find in that knowledge the explanation of knowing the other factors of being. Essentialism begins with knowledge of essence, and thereafter introduces, as well as it can, into the knowledge of essence the knowledge of existence and so on. Essentialism, having cut the placental cord which ties knowledge to being, is most certainly right in saying that the knowledge of a being whose essence it is to exist is knowledge that such a being exists. But if that cord may not be cut, if there be no more in our knowledge of essences than what is put there by our knowledge of things, if the essences of the things we know are not

God but sensible quiddities, if even our knowledge of being as being is a product of experience, how then can an existentialist find in his knowledge, which comes from the things he sees, the knowledge that God, Whom he sees not, exists? He cannot. He cannot, that is, find in his knowledge of one whose essence it is to exist any more than *knowledge* that one who must be necessarily must be. This is far different from finding that such a being exists. It is finding only that such a being must be *thought* to exist.

THE REQUISITES OF EXISTENTIALIST AND ESSENTIALIST PROOF

An existentialist must prove that God exists, and proof for him is not merely a causality of knowledges by which, *e.g.*, the knowledge of a being whose essence it is to be, causes the further knowledge that such a being exists. Such causality lands us merely from one knowledge into another knowledge. Proof for an existentialist is also based upon a causality of being, because his knowledge to start with is caused by being. Here then is the difference between essentialism and existentialism in the matter of proof: Essentialism conceives proof only as a causality of subsequent knowledge by prior knowledge; existentialism conceives proof as an instance of the causality of being, because the caused sequence of knowledge is the caused sequence of being which is known.

The point must be made clearer. Proof for both essentialism and existentialism is a linking of the unknown to the known with the result that the unknown becomes known. For example, let it be unknown who was the first to cross the bridge; let it be known that of all who crossed the first man alone had a wooden leg. Find the man with the wooden leg and you have found the first man to cross. Thus, the identity of the first man to cross is revealed in knowing who had the wooden leg, because it is known that *he* was the first to cross. Both existentialist and essentialist would try to find the man with the wooden leg. It is not in the direction of their search that their notion of proof differs. It is rather in what each turns up with at the end of the search. The essentialist turns up with the *knowledge* of an individual with a wooden leg; the existentialist turns up with the *individual himself*, wooden leg and all, because it is of *him* that we have *knowledge* when we have it.

If the example seems loaded in favor of the existentialist, let us take one seemingly, but not really, less favorable. Assume as unknown that man is an animal; assume as known that a sentient being is an animal. Find that man is sentient and you have found that man is an animal. Here, as before, there seems to be no difference in the direction of the essentialist's and existentialist's search: both try to find that man is sentient. Nor does there *seem* to be any difference in what each would turn up with: both would turn up with a universal proposition, *Man is sentient.* Now, since that universal proposition is about essences, would it not seem that here at least the essentialist is right? After all, universal propositions express the relations of essences, and such relations are true irrespective of existents. The point which essentialism urges becomes even stronger in case of mathematicals: *two and two is four* is not only true even if four units do not exist; it is also true despite the fact that four units, as numbers, cannot exist. Is not, therefore, the essentialist right in maintaining that proof moves merely from knowledge-cause to knowledge-effect, precisely because there is nothing more in *man is sentient* or *two and two is four* than knowledge and true knowledge at that? Certainly existents are not in these propositions, if they would be true even if there were not existents—and they are true even in the absence of existents; besides, mathematical propositions are true despite the fact that their objects, number and shapes or figures, cannot exist.

THE ARGUMENT FOR THE REQUISITES OF EXISTENTIALIST PROOF

It may come as a hard saying, but the essentialist is not right. Universal propositions express the relations of essences, no doubt. Nevertheless, since the relations of essences which they express are based upon the related essences themselves, the whole question comes to this: exactly what do we grasp when we grasp an essence? Existentialism answers: essence is the end product of a noetic of these two phases: (1) We apprehend an existent. (2) We apprehend in an existent an essence, that is, what the existent is. Such, in fact, is the course we take in knowing the universal, the intelligible, the possible, the necessary. We know, first, the singular, the sensible, the actual, the contingent. It is they plus the agent intellect which cause our knowledge of the universal, the intelligible, the possible, the necessary. Thus, we know species and genus (universals) from having known *this* instance of them; we know "what animal is" (an essence) from having known what *this* animal is. We know that that *can* exist (the possible) which we have known *does* exist. We know that what we have first known to be cannot, while it is, not-be (the necessary). True, we may form propositions concerning essences of things which we have never experienced: *there are possibly mountains of pure gold*, for instance; but we cannot do that until we have experienced mountains and pure gold.

An essentialist noetic conceives the matter differently. Essence, the universal, the intelligible, the possible, the necessary, all these are known upon the occasion of, not because of, experience. All these knowledges pop before the mind, not as purely mental products (chimerae), nor as coming *from* the experience of beings, but pop before the mind whensoever experience stimulates but does not cause them.

As is clear, the radical difference in the two positions is this; existentialism maintains that beings and the agent intellect cause our knowledge of them; essentialism maintains that being, if you will, "causes" our knowledge, but that being is essence-being. Since an existentialist will maintain that essence-being is not being at all, and that knowledge merely of essence-being is not knowledge of being at all, he will charge an essentialist with knowing, not things as they are, but things as they are known.

Which is right? It depends simply on this: Is or is not being, *i.e.*, that which exists or can exist, an essence? One might also say that it depends simply on this: Do we or do we not have knowledge of being, *i.e.*, knowledge of that which exists or can exist? There is no proof for either the *yes* or the *no* to those two questions. But one who says *yes* to the first assumes the aporias of essentialism. Yes, being is an essence, essentialism maintains. It follows that to exist is to be, say, a fish, because *fish* is an essence; then what about the beings which are *not* fish? If they are beings, yet are not fish—whereas fish is being—what are they? One who says, "*No* we do not know what exists or can exist, but rather we know objects in which, to start with, existence is not given," finds himself in the position of knowing, not things, but something or other in the realm of an ideal world; he knows not being, but being as known.

There is no *proof* either that things are or that we know them. There is simply evidence both that beings exist and that it is they which we know. There is no disproof either that being is essence or that our knowledge of essence is disconnected with existents. There is simply lack of evidence that it is so. All the evidence is on the side that there are things and that we know them; we feel, see, hear, etc., them, and we do have science about things. There is no evidence that being is essence or that what we know is essence, known apart from having known existents, and there is plenty of trouble ahead for one who maintains that being is essence and that our knowledge is not of being but purely of essences.

Although, as has been said, there is no proof that it is being, not essence, which exists and of which we have knowledge, even in our knowledge of essence, there can nevertheless be proof that being A exists *if* being B exists and we know it. There is no proof that anything exists if, as essentialism maintains, being is essence and if in knowing essence we are cut off from knowing being.

There can be proof that bad oysters made you sick if the oysters were bad and you were sick; but you cannot prove the oysters were bad or that you were sick. You can only, say, smell the oysters and let your queasiness bear witness to your sickness. You cannot prove that bad oysters made you sick if both you and the oysters are inexistent essences, and if your knowledge of them is a knowledge, not of being, but purely of essences. Obviously one may say that the knowledge of bad oysters, eaten, leads to the knowledge of a sick eater, but that does not prove that the bad oysters really did the job, not unless you and the oysters are somewhere else besides being in knowledge; not unless you and the oysters exist.

As to proof in which *all* the propositions are essential, *e.g.*, sentient beings are animals, man is a sentient being, man is an animal, the case is pretty much the same. An existentialist maintains that these relations of essences are based upon essences, that essences are known from our experiential contact with beings, and that is why the proof holds in the order of being. Cut off from existents at the very start, essentialism must say that *man is sentient* in knowledge alone. Existentialism maintains that *man is sentient* in knowledge, because man is sentient in fact.

Even the truth of mathematical statements is not, in existentialism, quite unconnected with existents. True, mathematical truth does not depend wholly upon existents in order to be *known* as it is known; but it depends somewhat upon existents in order to *be* as it is known, or, if you will, in order to be known as it *is*. Take the number four and the nature of cones. The knowledge of these does not depend wholly upon existents in order to be *known* as they are known. The number four and the nature of cones are not known as *these* four and as *this* cone as a condition of their being *known* as *four* and as a *cone;* nor are they known as four *hot* cones or as a *flabby* cone as a condition of their being *known* as *four* and as a *cone;* nor, finally, need they be known as four *oxen* or as a *paper* cone in order to be *known* as *four* and as a *cone*. Mathematicals are *known* apart from knowing singular or common sensible matter, and apart also from knowing particular intelligible matter; and as so *known* they exist only in knowledge, not in things. But mathematicals are not known as they *are*, nor *are* they as they are known, apart from some knowing of existents. Numbers and cones, as they exist in themselves, must be discontinuous or continuous stuff. Now, stuff is existential. Moreover, in order to exist in knowledge mathematicals must carry along with them into knowledge the knowledge of stuff, although what their stuff is need not be particularized. Thus, in order to *know* mathematicals it is not necessary to *know* them as (1) *these* —singular sensible matter, nor (2) as *sensible* (the hot, the cold, etc.)

—common sensible matter, nor (3) as *kinds* of beings (man, paper, cabbage, etc.)—particular intelligible matter. Nevertheless, in order to know mathematicals as they exist or can exist it is necessary to know them as units or natures of unspecified stuff—common intelligible matter. Whence, we should never know mathematicals unless we had experienced quantity, continuous and discontinuous. Where quantity cannot be experienced, because there is none, as in angels, we must roundly admit that no counting or picture drawing is possible. Our counting of angels is as if they were material countable units, and our picturing of them is not notably successful.

In sum, existents are a necessary presupposition of existentialism in order that proof may prove. Existents must introduce an object into knowledge and maintain it there. Existents must introduce an object into knowledge, else we cannot explain the evident fact that we know things. Existents must maintain objects in knowledge, else we cannot say what can and must be—this is science—because we never would know what actually is. In mathematicals, the wedge which existents drive into knowledge is very small indeed, it is uncharacterized stuff; but without that tip there would be no knowledge of numbers or shapes or figures. Indeed, without that tip metageometries and meta-arithmetics would be meta-nothing.

Existentialist and Essentialist Proof at Grips

THE METAPHYSICAL BASIS OF AUGUSTINIAN PROOF

To get back to Augustine, it is not to the point to deny that he was an essentialist or ontologist. In a very real way he was not. But he borrowed from Plotinus, a real essentialist, the helpless sort of being which essentialism proffers. Having such being on his hands, by way of creation of course—in that he was not an essentialist—Augustine, although he does not think so, is at a loss to make his essence-being go to work. Essence-being and essentialist knowledge have really nothing to do. Augustine nevertheless strives to make his essence-being do something. In the realm of nature the causality of essence-being will be the causality of seminal principles. In the realm of knowledge the truth of our judgments involving essence-being will be caused by divine illumination. The question remains, can the doctrine of seminal principles and divine illumination secure the causality in nature and knowledge which St. Augustine so much desires? Most certainly Augustine intends that it shall: "Accordingly He [God] so governs all the things which He has created that He also allows them to exercise and perform their own movements." [7] Are his intentions fulfilled?

The doctrine of seminal principles is this: the effects of nature are put into nature by God at the first moment of nature's creation. Thereafter those effects issue from nature pretty much as peas from a pea-shooter. Under the impact of stimuli out they pop, not as something really new, but as something whose appearance alone is new; the effects were there, latent in their causes, all the time. The doctrine of divine illumination is this: the truth of those judgments which are called nowadays essential judgments, is caused by God.

THE METAPHYSICAL BASIS OF THOMISTIC PROOF

St. Thomas Aquinas rejects both theories in principle, because

> if inferior agents do no more than bring out, from their concealment, into the open the forms and the habits of virtues and of the sciences, by way of removing the impediments which covered them over, it follows that no inferior agents act except accidentally.[8]

Clearly, St. Thomas thinks that if the effects of nature are simply under wraps within their causes, there is no true causality of the supposed agents.

In particular St. Thomas rejects seminal principles because they destroy passive potency or prime matter, a necessary factor in the explanation of substantial change.[9] Divine illumination he rejects, although he keeps its name because it dispenses with our causality in the formation of our knowledge. "It does not seem probable," he writes, "that there be no principle in the rational soul by which it can fulfill its natural operation; and that would be the conclusion if a single agent intellect were posited, whether it be called God or an intelligence."[10] The knowing agent, St. Thomas thinks, produces its own truth, and the instrument by which the knowing agent does this, the human intellect, *this* is divine illumination.[11]

---

[7] St. Augustine, *De Civ. Dei*, VII, 30 (PL 41, col. 220).

[8] St. Thomas Aquinas, *De Verit.*, XI, 1, *Resp.*

[9] St. Thomas Aquinas, *Sum. Theol.*, I, 115, 2, *Resp.*, et ad 4.

AUGUSTINE'S PROOF OF THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

Let us now suppose St. Augustine furnished with a knowledge whose essential truth comes from God. The question is, how may such knowledge demonstrate the existence of God? Take any essential truth, say *seven and three are ten*. That truth is necessary: seven and three must be ten; it is eternal: seven and three are always ten; it is immutable: seven and three can be nothing else but ten. Whence come those attributes of essential truth? Certainly not from ten existent units, because they are contingent, temporal, mutable; nor from the mind, because it also is contingent, temporal and mutable; besides, the mind sees, it does not make, essential truth. The mind, therefore, in seeing that *seven and three are ten* must see, not God—He is not ten units, nor creatures, and they have no such characteristics as essential truth possesses—but see a truth which participates in the Truth which is God.

The points to notice in the Augustinian demonstration are two. First, *seven and three are ten* is a truth given over to us; we do not make, though we do recognize or formulate that truth. Secondly, the truth of essential propositions is not the truth which is God, nor is it the contingent, temporal, mutable truth of creatures. This being clear, it follows that the mind, in discovering absolute, essential truth, has discovered something which, transcending creatures and the mind, must be itself transcended by the Truth which is God. Essential truth, which is not God, has such characteristics as only God, Whom such characteristics imitate, is.

---

[10] St. Thomas Aquinas, *In II Sent.*, 17, 2, 1, *Sol.:* "et ideo, remotis praedictis erroribus." Cf. *In de Anima*, III, lect. 1; ed. Pirotta, n. 10: "non enim homo esset a natura sufficienter constitutus, si non haberet in seipso principia quibus posset operationem complere, quae est intelligere; . . . unde perfectio humanae naturae requirit quod utrumque [intellectus possibilis et intellectus agens] eorum sit aliquid in homine."

[11] St. Thomas Aquinas, *Sum. Theol.*, I, 84, 5, *Resp.*

ST. THOMAS' ARGUMENT AGAINST ST. AUGUSTINE'S PROOF

If St. Augustine is wrong on one point, his alleged evidence of the existence of God is no evidence at all. Let these four statements be marked off: (1) Things are contingent, temporal, mutable. (2) Our minds are contingent, temporal, mutable. (3) The truth of essential propositions is not from things nor from the mind. (4) The truth of essential propositions participates in the Truth which is God. There is nothing debatable about propositions 1, 2, and 4. The difficulty lies in proposition 3, and it is this: how exactly can the truth of *seven and three are ten* be neither a creature, nor the mind, nor God, and yet be at all?

Obviously, anything not God must, if it be at all, be a creature. Any Christian metaphysic must agree to that. Yet the truth of *seven and three are ten* is, according to St. Augustine, neither God nor a creature. Just where, in the Christian dichotomy by which whatever is not God is a creature, and whatever is a creature is not God, does *seven and three are ten* fit?

St. Thomas discusses the matter apropos of the number six because Augustine had remarked that if the creatures which God made in six days were nonexistent, nevertheless six would still be a perfect six.[12] St. Thomas first points out that if there were no existent sixes, there would not be—careful man—any existent sixes. Next, he remarks, six can be taken as an idea in God, where, because it is not a creature but rather a divine idea of a creature, it is the same as God Himself. Then comes the crucial point: what is six apart from its being a divine idea of a creature and apart from its being a creature, *i.e.*, six existents? It is, he answers, an absolute consideration of the number six. *Absolute* consideration, he explains, is a consideration in which six is viewed neither as six existents nor as the thought of six. In this absolute consideration six is not six existents, because six is six, whether there be six things or not; nor is six the thought of six, because six is six, whether we think six or not. Absolute thus means freed from the conditions of being six things and of being the

[12] St. Thomas Aquinas, *Quodlibet.*, VIII, 1, 1.

thought of six. In that absolute state the only thing true of six is simply and solely that it is six. Absolute *consideration* is knowledge which abstracts six both from the state of being six existents and from the state which six assumes in our knowledge of six, the state, namely, of being thought of. Now comes the delicate point: that absolute six, although it is *considered* as being neither in nature nor as being in knowledge, is nevertheless, precisely because it cannot be so considered except by *considering* it, only in knowledge. The absolute six is thus in knowledge alone in the sense that it is never found outside its status of being understood, although the fact that it is understood is irrelevant to the fact that it is six which is understood. Seven or eight or ten, etc., could be understood just as well.

The point just made has immense significance in relation to proof, whether of existence or of the possibility of existence, because it is a denial of Augustine's third proposition: the truth of essential propositions is not from things nor from the mind. St. Thomas is saying in effect that absolute natures, *e.g.*, the nature of six, upon which are erected absolute judgments, *are* from the mind and things. He is saying that we cause our knowledge: that six is not the absolute six, nor are seven and three ten, etc., unless there be someone thinking those truths; he is saying that *six is six* and *seven and three are ten* in *thought*. He is saying that we make the truth of our knowledge, not in the sense that what we make we can also unmake, *e.g.*, make the true (six is six) false (six is not six) or *vice versa*, but in the sense that unless *we* make it the knowledge will not be made, *i.e.*, *we* shall not have true knowledge. The fear of idealism which such a position might inspire arises from idealism itself. True knowledge, although it be our own making, is knowledge of being; being is the stuff, the food of knowledge. Once grant that—and, as we have seen, that is a fundamental evidence in existentialism—we cannot thereafter dissociate the knower from the known, the object of knowledge from the intellect which knows. Precisely because idealism does dissociate the knower from the known, knowledge from its object, precisely because *it* can no longer effect their juncture, idealism thinks that existentialism is doing the same thing when it says that the knower makes his knowledge and its truth. Not at all.

This is no dissociation being practised here by existentialism. We do indeed cause our knowledge and its truth, but the effect of our causality is to know being, precisely because there cannot be, for an existentialist, any true knowledge unless it be of being: we cause the knowledge and truth which being causes us to cause. Proof, therefore, for an existentialist is by means of middle terms, which are *existential* principles of the things known. These terms are not, as in essentialism, essence-beings, which come neither from the mind nor from things; they are essences of beings, if you will, which come from the intellect, because being has furnished the intellect with the stuff, the essence of an existent, actual or possible.[13]

[13] The intellectual pressure exerted by essentialism is manifold. For example, if we make the truth of our knowledge, how can that be consistent with the apparent fact that the truth of some of our knowledge is eternal? For example, the nature of a circle and "three and two is five" are always true, before, during, and after our supposed making. How then can we make what was true before, and will be true after, our making? St. Thomas, existentialist if ever there was, answers in general terms that "the truth of enuntiables is nothing else but the truth of the intellect." In particular he becomes brusquely curt: "Created truth is not eternal" (*Sum. Theol.* I, 16, 7, *Resp.*). The nature of a circle and "three and two is five" has eternity only in God's intellect. That and that alone, viz., God's intellect, is eternal truth. Our truth is not eternal. Nor can one argue that universals, because they are everywhere and always the same, are eternal. Universals are eternal only in an eternal intellect, if any; they are not eternal upon the score of being abstractions from time and place. Essentialism makes another attempt: Take any proposition, true here and now; it was always true that the presently true proposition was to be true; whence, at least a proposition concerning a future event is eternal. Not at all, answers St. Thomas, a future event will occur by reason of a cause. Take away the cause, and a proposition concerning a future event is not true at all. Now, only God is eternal. Whence, the only grounds for the truth of a proposition concerning a future event is in the eternal cause of that event, God. Essentialism makes a last effort: Truth has no beginning and no end; no beginning, because if it began, it was true *before* that beginning that there was no truth; no end, because if it ends, it will be true *after* that ending that there is no truth. St. Thomas answers: Since our intellect is not eternal, neither is its truth. The truth of our intellects began, and before it began, certainly one can say that it did not exist; but the only one who can say that is God; we could not say that, not being there to say anything. Obviously, we can say *now* that once upon a time our truth was nonexistent; nevertheless that present statement of ours is true by a *present* truth, not by a truth which antecedes our knowledge and is not God's knowledge either. Only an intellect can apprehend that it is true that something did not exist, and the only intellect which can do *that* with an eternal truth in its apprehension is God's.

Essentialism exerts further pressure upon the score that truth is immutable, whereas our minds and things are mutable. Truth, answers St. (*Continued*)

ST. THOMAS' CONCEPTION OF PROOF

These things being so, exactly what does it mean to speak as we do, of eternal truth? [14] The eternity of truth, St. Thomas explains, and, with due regard for differences, the explanation holds for the necessity and immutability of truth, may mean that the content of certain truths is eternal, or that the means by which we conceive truth are eternal. Those means are intelligible species, phantasms, and the agent intellect. These means are not eternal. The content of certain truth is eternal.

Right there lies the delicate point. Is not St. Thomas saying exactly the same thing as St. Augustine said and as Plato said before Augustine? Is not the starting point, namely, the content of eternal truth, the same for all these men? In what precisely does that

---

Thomas, is not immutable (*loc. cit.*, art. 8). Truth is the conformity of the intellect with the things understood. Vary either term and let the other stand: let *a* be *be;* let a man who thought *a is b* now think *a is c;* or, let a man think that *a is b,* whereas *a* is no longer *b* but is now *c*. In both ways there is change from truth to falsity. Of course, if there be an intellect which cannot change, the truth of that intellect is immutable. Whence, "the truth of the divine intellect is immutable, but the truth of our intellect is mutable," not indeed because truth is the subject of change, but because the truth of our intellect is. It would be tedious, perhaps, to go on with objections to the position that the truth of our intellect is mutable, whereas, only the Truth which is God is immutable.

Tedious also would be St. Thomas' account, here and now, about the necessary. Suffice it here to say that just as he absorbs the eternity and immutability of truth into the eternal and unchangeable God, so also does he absorb the necessity of truth into the actuality of the divine essence. Throughout his argument he is pleased to speak as if St. Augustine were agreeing with him throughout. Perhaps he does.

St. Thomas does not agree with an essentialist notion of truth, and because he does not, he does not agree with an essentialist notion of proof. Truth, St. Thomas lays down, is the known conformity of the intellect with the things understood. (It is well to mention right here that truth is only in the judgment, and hence only judicative knowledge can be true knowledge. There is only inchoative truth in concepts. The whole discussion assumes that true knowledge is judicative.) Now, our known conformity with the things understood, our truth, is not eternal; it began and ceases with our thought. It is not immutable, not that truth itself is subject to change, but our truth is subject to change; sometimes we are right, sometimes we are wrong. Nor is our truth necessary: it need not have been at all, much less need it have been necessarily. All these characteristics—eternity, necessity, immutability—are characteristics of the Truth which is God.

[14] St. Thomas Aquinas, *Contra Gentiles,* II, 84, *ad quod vero secundo dicitur.*

probative link between eternal truth and God, viz., the content of eternal truth, differ as between essentialism and existentialism? It differs in this: the content of eternal truth in essentialism is an essence content, *what things are*. Now, the knowledge that God exists does not form a part of, does not enter into, the knowledge of any essence. Obviously, we can understand a thing in terms of what it is, say *man* or *four* without involving ourselves in understanding also that there is a God. The reason is: an efficient cause is not a part of a thing's nature or essence. But—here is the point existentialism makes—we can not understand the *being* which is in the content of truth except we understand it as derived from the divine being.[15]

What is St. Thomas saying here? He is distinguishing what a thing is, *i.e.*, essence, and the knowledge of essence, from that which exists or can exist, *i.e.*, being, and the knowledge of being. He is saying, first, that essence is not being; it is what a being is. He is saying secondly that the knowledge of essence, since it is not knowledge of being, is still less knowledge of another being, viz., a cause. On the other hand, that which exists or can exist is being, and knowledge of being, since being, if limited, must have a cause, can involve one who knows limited being in knowing also the cause of limited being.

Summary of the Differences Between Existentialism and Essentialism

DIFFERENCES IN METAPHYSICS AND IN KNOWLEDGE

There is a world of difference here between truth as essentialism and truth as existentialism conceive it, the difference of a Platonic from an existential world. The difference lies in two dimensions: in the dimension of the truth of being and in the dimension of the truth of our knowledge concerning being. In a Platonic world the truth of being is eternal, etc., because at bottom being is essence, and essences are eternal. The truth of being in an existential world is eternal and temporal, necessary and contingent, immutable and changing, because being is eternal and temporal, etc. Paralleling this difference as between Platonic essence and existential *being* there is a difference between the Platonic and existential truth of our *knowledge* concerning being. Knowledge is of two sorts: *conceptual* and *judicative*. The essentialist *concept* of being prescinds from the "ising" of the "isers": that is, the concept does not signify the act of existing, actual or possible, of a subject of that act; it signifies only a subject, with a significance which neither includes nor excludes an actual or possible act of existing. Existential conceptual knowledge of being does signify the act, actual or possible, of a subject of the act of existing. The difference between essentialist and existentialist *judgments* is this: in essentialism a true judgment affirms or denies that an act of existing is in a subject which represents either real or purely conceptual being; existentialism understands a true judgment as affirming or denying that the unity of the subject and predicate does, or does not, exercise an act of existing, actual or possible. Thus in existentialism the act of existing signified in the concept of that which is or can be, is known in and by the judgment to be effectively exercised in the actual or possible order, both of which orders are existential. Essentialism maintains that a true judgment affirms or denies "ising" of a subject—*of what?*—of "ising"? No, because "ising" was not included in nor excluded from the concept of a subject of existence. Of what, then? Of a subject which, because "ising" was neither excluded nor included in the concept of that subject, is not a subject of, but is, being.

---

[15] St. Thomas Aquinas, *De Pot.*, III, 5, obj. 1, et *Resp.*

The content of the truth of existential knowledge is being, being which is signified in the concept, and which is signified *and* affirmed or denied as exercised, in the judgment. The content of essentialist truth is an adamantine lump of essence, the essence of being, because being is an essence. Chesterton once mournfully remarked that if Aunt So-and-So was not a person, then who is? Just so here: if being is not that which exists or can exist, then what is being? If our knowledge of being which is conceptual is not knowledge which only signifies something which is or can be; and if our knowledge which is judicative is not knowledge which both signifies and affirms or denies that something exists or can exist; then what is knowledge of being knowledge of?

DIFFERENCES IN THE CONCEPTION OF PROOF

The nature of proof depends upon how we understand the content of truth. Assume with existentialism that the content of knowledge is being. That content grows by reasoning, which discovers a new truth (induction), or draws out (deduction) from an imperfectly known truth better knowledge of it. In either case the conclusion of existential reasoning is a truth which affirms or denies that its content is or can be, because the antecedents of that conclusion concerned being. Essentialist conclusions no more concern being than did the antecedents of those conclusions; they concern essences. Let there be this proposition (deduced or induced), *man is an animal.* Essentialist knowledge understands that proposition to identify man-animal with being, *i.e.*, it conceives that to say *man is an animal* is the same as to say that man-animal exists or can exist, *because* man-animal *is* being. Existentialist knowledge understands that proposition not as identifying man-animal with being: it is not because being is or can be *identified* with man-animal that *man is an animal.* Being cannot be identified with essence, else to be would be to be man-animal, and then there is nothing else left over for being to be, *e.g.*, being could not be inanimate. *Man is an animal,* for existential knowledge, means that existence, actual or possible, must be *associated,* not *identified,* with an essence, because the data of experience have demanded that association. Thus, *man is an animal* truly states what that is which is or can be, but the statement is not true *because* being is identified with essence; it is true because we find that truth in the data of experience (induction) or draw it (deduction) from principles which come also from experience. It should by now be apparent what existentialist proof is: it is the caused sequence of knowledge which duplicates the caused sequence of being, because knowledge is of being.

THOMISTIC PROOF ILLUSTRATED

Let us illustrate what proof means by proving, and let our example of proof be drawn from "eternal truth," since it is this sort of truth in which the difference between existentialist and essentialist proof is crucial. Let there be an eternal truth: *two and two are four.* First of all, it is evident that there *are* four things. There is no proof of *that.* Secondly, it is self-evident that if there are four things, there *can* be four things. There is no proof of that. Thirdly, it is neither evident nor self-evident that to exist or to be able to exist is to be or to be able to be four: not evident because we see fives, sixes, ships and shoes and sealing-wax, etc.; not self-evident because if to be or to be able to be were necessarily to be or to be able to be four, there could be nothing else but four. Why, then, is being four and why can being be four? That being is four is evident; that it can be four if it is four, is self-evident. The question is, why is it to four that being accrues or can accrue? There are only these answers: (1) we don't know, (2) being does not accrue to four, (3) being accrues to four from a cause. Answer (2) identifies being with being four. It is an impossible answer. Answer (1) must be withdrawn by one who sees that four exists and can exist, and that four does not and cannot exist solely because it is four. One who admits these two points must admit that four exists because it is made to exist, and four can exist because there is a cause able to make it to exist. In either case, there is a cause which makes or can make being to be four. This (3) is proof; in the ontological order its factors are effect and cause; in the order of knowledge, it is the knowledge of the being of a datum (an effect or cause) which involves us in knowing that there is a cause or effect of the being of that datum.

Summary and Conclusion

Not that our present concern is to prove God's existence from eternal truth or from anything else. Our present concern is to show what proof is. Since in history if not in philosophy we first meet with an attempt to prove God from the characteristics of scientific knowledge, *e.g.*, its eternity, necessity, etc., we must, in order to see if such proof will work, go at once to the point at issue: of what do we have true knowledge? Of being, both parties agree. What is being? Being is the existence, actual or possible, of an essence, existentialism maintains. No, protests essentialism, being is the essence of an existent. Similarly for knowledge: true knowledge, in existentialism, is knowledge which affirms or denies the existence, actual or possible, of that which has an essence. It is the other way about in essentialism: true knowledge affirms or denies the essence of an existent. If, now, we stuff those terms with intelligible content, the difference will become more apparent. Let an essence be six.[16] Essentialism maintains that six is necessarily, immutably, eternally six; that six existents have not those characteristics; that God is not six. Whence, there must be a being which overtops six just as six overtops things and our mind. Existentialism's blunt answer to that is this: six does not transcend things or our mind. We know six from having known six existents, and six, considered as being apart from six existents and our knowledge of six, exists nowhere except in knowledge, precisely because neither six nor anything else can be considered apart from six things and the knowledge of six, except in knowledge. Whose knowledge? Ours if we are around to do any considering. If we are not, the eternal truth of six is the eternal truth which God is. "And this is eternal truth." [17]

> The truth of enuntiables is nothing else but the truth of the intellect . . . whence if no intellect were eternal, no truth would be eternal, but because only the divine intellect is eternal, in it alone does truth have eternity. Nor does it follow from this that something else is eternal besides God; because the truth of the divine intellect is God.[18]

Proof in existentialism thus moves from the characteristics either of being or the knowledge of being. It is the last sort of proof which has been our immediate concern, because essentialism raised the question about proof from the characteristics of knowledge. How-

---

[16] St. Thomas Aquinas, *Quodlibet.*, VIII, 1, 1.

[17] St. Thomas Aquinas, *De Verit.*, I, 5, ad 2. Cf. *De Pot.*, III, 5, ad 2.

[18] St. Thomas Aquinas, *Sum. Theol.*, I, 16, 7. Cf. *In I Sent.*, 19, 5, 3; *De Verit.*, I, 3, ad 3; I, 5, ad 2 et ad 16; *De Pot.*, III, 5.

THOMISTIC PROOF ILLUSTRATED

Let us illustrate what proof means by proving, and let our example of proof be drawn from "eternal truth," since it is this sort of truth in which the difference between existentialist and essentialist proof is crucial. Let there be an eternal truth: *two and two are four.* First of all, it is evident that there *are* four things. There is no proof of *that.* Secondly, it is self-evident that if there are four things, there *can* be four things. There is no proof of that. Thirdly, it is neither evident nor self-evident that to exist or to be able to exist is to be or to be able to be four: not evident because we see fives, sixes, ships and shoes and sealing-wax, etc.; not self-evident because if to be or to be able to be were necessarily to be or to be able to be four, there could be nothing else but four. Why, then, is being four and why can being be four? That being is four is evident; that it can be four if it is four, is self-evident. The question is, why is it to four that being accrues or can accrue? There are only these answers: (1) we don't know, (2) being does not accrue to four, (3) being accrues to four from a cause. Answer (2) identifies being with being four. It is an impossible answer. Answer (1) must be withdrawn by one who sees that four exists and can exist, and that four does not and cannot exist solely because it is four. One who admits these two points must admit that four exists because it is made to exist, and four can exist because there is a cause able to make it to exist. In either case, there is a cause which makes or can make being to be four. This (3) is proof; in the ontological order its factors are effect and cause; in the order of knowledge, it is the knowledge of the being of a datum (an effect or cause) which involves us in knowing that there is a cause or effect of the being of that datum.

Summary and Conclusion

Not that our present concern is to prove God's existence from eternal truth or from anything else. Our present concern is to show what proof is. Since in history if not in philosophy we first meet with an attempt to prove God from the characteristics of scientific knowledge, *e.g.*, its eternity, necessity, etc., we must, in order to see if such proof will work, go at once to the point at issue: of what do we have true knowledge? Of being, both parties agree. What is being? Being is the existence, actual or possible, of an essence, existentialism maintains. No, protests essentialism, being is the essence of an existent. Similarly for knowledge: true knowledge, in existentialism, is knowledge which affirms or denies the existence, actual or possible, of that which has an essence. It is the other way about in essentialism: true knowledge affirms or denies the essence of an existent. If, now, we stuff those terms with intelligible content, the difference will become more apparent. Let an essence be six.[16] Essentialism maintains that six is necessarily, immutably, eternally six; that six existents have not those characteristics; that God is not six. Whence, there must be a being which overtops six just as six overtops things and our mind. Existentialism's blunt answer to that is this: six does not transcend things or our mind. We know six from having known six existents, and six, considered as being apart from six existents and our knowledge of six, exists nowhere except in knowledge, precisely because neither six nor anything else can be considered apart from six things and the knowledge of six, except in knowledge. Whose knowledge? Ours if we are around to do any considering. If we are not, the eternal truth of six is the eternal truth which God is. "And this is eternal truth." [17]

> The truth of enuntiables is nothing else but the truth of the intellect . . . whence if no intellect were eternal, no truth would be eternal, but because only the divine intellect is eternal, in it alone does truth have eternity. Nor does it follow from this that something else is eternal besides God; because the truth of the divine intellect is God.[18]

Proof in existentialism thus moves from the characteristics either of being or the knowledge of being. It is the last sort of proof which has been our immediate concern, because essentialism raised the question about proof from the characteristics of knowledge. However, it was necessary to see in one case the requisite of proof in either case. That requisite is being, in nature or in knowledge.

---

[16] St. Thomas Aquinas, *Quodlibet.*, VIII, 1, 1.

[17] St. Thomas Aquinas, *De Verit.*, I, 5, ad 2. Cf. *De Pot.*, III, 5, ad 2.

[18] St. Thomas Aquinas, *Sum. Theol.*, I, 16, 7. Cf. *In I Sent.*, 19, 5, 3; *De Verit.*, I, 3, ad 3; I, 5, ad 2 et ad 16; *De Pot.*, III, 5.

Without that requisite there is no proof of anything at all, because there is no trajectory from knowing essence, which is not being, to knowing being, which is not essence. Once more let it be recalled that there is no proof that there is being and that it is being we know; there is simply evidence. On the other hand, there is no proof of anything if proof must be proved or if essences are beings.

Suggested Reading

Platonic essentialism:

Plato, *Sophistes*, 242c–264b.

Arnou, R., S.J., "Platonisme des pères," *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique*, XII, 2, coll. 2258–2392.

Chevalier, J., *La notion du nécessaire chez Aristote et chez ses prédécesseurs*, Pt. I, Ch. II.

Forest, A., *La structure métaphysique du concret selon saint Thomas d'Aquin*, Ch. I.

Gilson, E., *Being and Some Philosophers*, Ch. I.

Pegis, A. C., "Cosmogony and Knowledge," *Thought*, XVIII, 71, pp. 643–664; XIX, 73, pp. 269–290; XX, 78, pp. 473–498.

Aristotelian substantialism:

Aristotle, *Metaph.*, I, 9; IV, 2; VII, 1.

St. Thomas Aquinas, *In Lib. de Causis*, lect. 18; *Sum. Theol.*, I, 44, 2; *De Spir. Creat.*, V.

Chevalier, J., *La notion du nécessaire chez Aristote et chez ses prédécesseurs*, Pt. II, Chs. I–II.

Forest, A., *La structure métaphysique du concret selon saint Thomas d'Aquin*, Ch. II.

Gilson, E., *Being and Some Philosophers*, Ch. II.

Jolivet, R., *La notion de substance*, Ch. I; *Essai sur les rapports entre la pensée grecque et la pensée chrétienne*, Ch. I.

Pegis, A. C., *St. Thomas and the Greeks.*

Augustinian essentialism:

St. Augustine, *Confessions*, VII, 17 (PL 32, col. 743); *De Lib. Arb.*, II, 2–15 (PL 32, coll. 1241–1263); *Soliloq.*, II, 5–8 (PL 32, coll. 887–892); *Contra Acad.*, III, 11 (PL 32, coll. 946–948); *De Vera Relig.*, I, 30 (PL 34, coll. 145–147); *De Div. Quaest. LXXXIII*, q. 45 (PL 40, coll. 28–29); q. 46 (PL 40, coll. 29–31); q. 54 (PL 40, col. 38); *De Civ. Dei*, VII, 30 (PL 41, coll. 219–220); XII, 2 (PL 41, col. 350); *De Trin.*, V, 2 (PL 42, col. 912); VIII, 3 (PL 42, coll. 949–951); IX, 6 (PL 42, coll. 965–967); XII, 2 (PL 42, col. 999).

Gilson, E., *Introduction à l'étude de saint Augustin*, Pt. I, Ch. V; Pt. II, Ch. I; Pt. III, Introd. and Conclusion; "Pourquoi saint Thomas a critiqué saint Augustin," *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du moyen âge*, I, pp. 5–127; "Les sources gréco-arabes de l'Augustinisme Avicennisant," *ibid.* IV, pp. 5–149; *Philosophie et Incarnation selon saint Augustin.*

Some thomistic texts on the ontological argument:

St. Thomas Aquinas, *In I Sent.*, 3, 1, 1; *In Boet. de Trin.*, I, 3; *Contra Gentiles*, I, 10–11; III, 52; *Sum. Theol.*, I, 2, 1–2; I, 12, 1–4; I, 16, 7; I, 84, 3–5; I, 94, 1; I–II, 5, 5; *De Verit.*, X, 12; XVIII, 1.

Some thomistic texts on essence and existence:

St. Thomas Aquinas, *In I Sent.*, 33, 1, 1–3; *De Ente et Essentia*, Chs. I–II, V–VI; *Contra Gentiles*, I, 26; *Sum. Theol.*, I, 3, 4; *De Pot.*, VII, 2.

St. Thomas' rejection of essentialism:

St. Thomas Aquinas, *In I Sent.*, 19, 5, 3; *In II Sent.*, 17, 2, 1; *De Ente et Essentia*, Chs. I–II, *Quodlibet.*, VIII, 1; *Sum. Theol.*, I, 16, 7; I, 84, 5; I, 115, 2; *De Verit.*, I, 3; I, 5; XI, 1; *De Pot.*, III, 5.

Forest, A., *La structure métaphysique du concret selon saint Thomas d'Aquin*, Ch. V.

Gilson, E., *L'être et l'essence*, Chs. I–V, IX; *Le réalisme méthodique*, Chs. II, V; *Le Thomisme*, Chs. I–II; *Réalisme thomiste et critique de la connaissance*, Chs. VII–VIII; *Being and Some Philosophers*, Ch. V; *The Spirit of Mediaeval Philosophy*, Chs. III–IV.

Jolivet, R., *Essai sur les rapports entre le pensée grecque et la pensée chrétienne*, pp. 159–198; *La notion de substance*, pp. 35–66.

Maritain, J., *Existence and the Existent*, Chs. I, III.

Mascall, E. L., *Existence and Analogy*, Chs. II–IV.

Paulus, J., *Henri de Gand. Essai sur les tendances de sa métaphysique*, Ch. V.

Roland-Gosselin, M.-D., O.P., *Le "De Ente et Essentia" de s. Thomas d'Aquin, Bibliothèque Thomiste*, VIII, Ch. IX.

St. Thomas' conception of proof:

St. Thomas Aquinas, *Contra Gentiles*, II, 84; *De Pot.*, III, 5.

Arnou, R., S.J., *De quinque viis sancti Thomae ad demonstrandam Dei* *existentiam apud antiquos Graecos et Arabes et Judaeos praeformatis vel adumbratis.*

Chossat, M., S.J., "Dieu, sa nature selon les scolastiques," *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique*, IV, 1, coll. 1152–1243.

De Tonquédec, J., S.J., *La critique de la connaissance*, Chs. VIII, XI.

Sertillanges, A. D., O.P., "Sur la démonstrabilité de Dieu. Comment on prouve Dieu," *Rev. Apolog.*, XLVI, pp. 385–395; 515–521.

Smith, G., S.J., "Before You Start Talking About God," *The Modern Schoolman*, XXII, 1, pp. 24–43.

II · WHAT PROOF IS AND WHAT IT IS NOT

What Proof Is

THE NATURE OF PROOF

The time spent on essentialism is well spent if it has become clear what proof is and what it is not. The proof that something exists or can exist presupposes that our knowledge is of existents and of their nature. Thus, proof is the expansion of the knowledge that *there is* x to the knowledge that *there is* y, because there could not be x, as there is, unless there were y. Deny the datum, *there is* x, and there is no proof that *there is* y; there is at best merely analysis that knowing x involves knowing y, an analysis which leaves us merely knowing what y is; it does not leave us knowing that what y is exists or can exist.

THE KINDS OF PROOF

Proof moves from cause to effect, or from effect to cause. Proof from cause to effect is called proof from a cause (*propter quid* proof). Proof from effect to cause is called proof from an effect (*quia* proof). *Propter quid* proof is from a prior knowledge of a cause, which cause is obviously also prior in nature, to the knowledge of an effect, which is posterior in nature and in our knowledge to our knowledge of the cause. Obviously a cause is prior in nature to its effect. It is the priority of a cause in our knowledge which needs clarification. The cause which is prior in our knowledge to our knowledge of its effect is not prior in our knowledge *as* a cause; if it were, there would be no need to prove an effect, since *posito antecedenti ponitur consequens.* The cause which is prior in our knowledge to our knowledge of its effect is prior (1) as being known before its effect is known, and (2) as being known as a datum. The knowing of the datum is itself an effect of some existent, and the datum is proved to be a cause of some other existent. For example, let death be proved from poison (its cause). Poison is not first known as a cause of the death which ensues from it, else there would be no need to prove death. We should know death without proof. Poison is in our knowledge as a datum which is put there by existent poison. That is, we know there is poison because in fact there *is* poison. We don't prove there is poison. That is given in experience. We prove that the poison, which we know without proof to be and to be poison, is the cause of death. How we prove that poison is a cause is irrelevant at this point, since we are concerned only with what *propter quid* proof is. It is knowledge of a datum which, because our knowledge of it sees that it would not be a datum unless there were another factor (not given in experience) issuing from it, grows into the knowledge, which is proof, that there *is* that other factor.

Quia proof moves from an effect, which is prior to the conclusion in our knowledge and posterior in nature, to a cause which is prior in nature and posterior in our knowledge. Obviously an effect is posterior to its cause in nature. It is the priority of an effect in our knowledge which needs clarification. Here also, the effect which is prior in our knowledge to our knowledge of its cause is not prior in our knowledge *as* an effect; if it were, there would be no need to prove a cause, since *posito consequenti* (in necessary matter) *ponitur antecedens.* The effect which is prior in our knowledge to our knowledge of its cause is prior as (1) being known before its cause is known, and (2) being known as a datum. The knowing of that datum is itself an effect of some existent, and the datum is proved to be the effect of some other existent. For example, let poison be proved from death. Death is not known as an effect of poison, else there would be no need to prove poison. We should know poison without proof. Death is in our knowledge as a datum which is put there by the one who is dead. That is, we know the person is dead because in fact he *is* dead. We do not prove he is dead. That is given in experience. We prove that the death, which we know without proof to be death, is the result of poison. Thus *quia* proof is knowledge of a datum which, because our knowledge of it sees that it would not be a datum unless there were another factor (not given in experience) from which it issues, grows into the knowledge, which is proof, that there *is* that other factor.

A PRIORI AND A POSTERIORI PROOF

Essentialism tends to assimilate *propter quid* and *quia* proof to the a priori and a posteriori divisions of Kantian knowledge, as if there were some sort of knowledge, viz., a priori knowledge, prior to experience, and as if a posteriori knowledge were a deduction from experience. There is no knowledge absolutely prior to experience, not even the principle of contradiction.[1] What is prior to experience in the proof of effect from cause is the knowledge that the poison is a cause; the knowledge that there is poison is not prior to experience. That knowledge is experience. Nor is a posteriori knowledge a deduction from experience. There are inductions from experience, but inductions are not strictly either *propter quid* or *quia* proof. They are discoveries of first principles and of the laws of nature. There is proof from experience, but it is not an induction. In order to keep the terms clearly distinct let us name things as follows. Proof from cause to effect is *propter quid* proof. Proof from effect to cause is *quia* proof. *Propter quid* proof is deduction. Induction is neither *propter quid* nor *quia* proof: it is a discovery, an invention. *Propter quid* proof may be called a priori, provided one understands the priority of the knowledge referred to as a priority of the knowledge of causal antecedents in relation to the knowledge of consequents caused by the knowledge of causal antecedents; it is not a priority of the knowledge of causal antecedents in relation to the knowledge of what antecedes *them*, viz., existents. The knowledge of existents is always prior to any knowledge. Sometimes the knowledge of existents may be a knowledge of the real causes of consequents: *propter quid* proof. Sometimes the knowledge of existents is not a knowledge of the causes of consequents but a knowledge which causes our *knowledge* of antecedents: *quia* proof. One may say also that *quia* proof is a posteriori provided one understands that the knowledge which is posterior to its antecedents is posterior to the knowledge of the cause of antecedents; it is not posterior to the knowledge which causes our knowledge of antecedents: it *is* that knowledge, viz., the knowledge of existents. Let it be known that someone is dead. The *quia* proof, if any, of "whodunit," lies in seeing that the person would not be dead, as he is, unless x did it.[2]

---

[1] The logical impossibility of affirming and denying at the same time a given predicate of a given subject is based upon the ontological impossibility of the *coexistence* of contradictories: Aristotle, *Metaph.*, IV, 4, 1005b 35–1006a 54. Vd. St. Thomas Aquinas, *In Metaph.*, IV, lect. 6, ed. Cathala, n. 606. Cf. *De Verit.*, X, 6: omnis nostra cognitio originaliter consistit in notitia primorum principiorum indemonstrabilium. Horum autem cognitio in nobis a sensu oritur. On *quia* and *propter quid* proof see *Sum. Theol.*, I, 2, 2, *Resp.*

CAUSALITY AND PROOF

Of course one who does not see that point, such a one does not prove. Moreover, one who thinks that to say, "if y, therefore x; because if not x, there is no y," is begging the question, such a one is confusing a proof *from* causality with a "proof" *of* causality. All proofs are from causality. No proof based upon causality proves causality. In fact, causality is not proved at all. If proof proves, there is no proof that it does. If, *e.g.*, this be proof: there is x, because there is y; nevertheless there is no proof of that. Causality is the basis of proof and an eduction from the principle of contradiction. The principle of contradiction itself is a natural induction from experience.[3] Thus, causality is not proved, it is seen as being the only explanation of a contingent existent, which existent, evidenced as is by experience, would be and not be at the same time unless it were caused. To prove is to see, in the light of the principle of causality, either that there must be the effect, because there is the cause; or that there must be the cause, because there is the effect. There is no demonstration by middle term of the principle of causality.

---

[2] The point concerning the relation of *propter quid* and *quia* proof to a priori and a posteriori proof respectively can be made thus: all *propter quid* proof is a priori, but not all a priori proof is *propter quid;* all a posteriori proof is *quia*, but not all *quia* proof is a posteriori. For example, *stones do not breathe because they are not animals*, is a priori proof but not *propter quid;* and it is *quia* but not a posteriori. Vd. Aristotle, *Post. Analy.*, I, 13, 78a 12; and St. Thomas Aquinas, *In Post. Analy.*, I, lect. 23. Aristotle and St. Thomas thought that some animals did not breathe. We may no longer be so open-minded upon that question.

The principle of causality, along with other principles, such as the principles of contradiction, identity, etc., depends upon the knowledge of being.[4] Just how all these principles are derived from the knowledge of being is not to the point here.[5] The relevant point is that such principles *are* derived from the knowledge of being in such wise that if they are not so derived, then one must quit thinking, because anything to think about has quit being. No first principles are proved. It is in the light of unproved first principles that conclusions are proved. As St. Edmund Campion remarked when summoned by his judges to adduce a revealed truth not found in the Bible, "Tobias had a dog, although the Bible says only that Tobias' dog wagged his tail." That is, to move back into philosophy, you can prove Tobias had a dog if there is an unproved, but known, waggle; or you can prove a waggle if there is an unproved, but known, dog. You cannot prove anything without the datum of being and the principles derived therefrom.

HOW GOD IS PROVED TO BE

The proof of God's existence is necessarily *quia* proof, from effect to cause. If there be a God He has no cause; at any rate, "concerning God we do not know what He is."[6]

---

[3] St. Thomas Aquinas, *In Post. Analy.*, II, lect. 20: *concludit Aristotelis.*

[4] St. Thomas Aquinas, *In Metaph.*, IV, lect. 6; ed. Cathala, n. 605.

[5] See F.-X. Maquart, *Elementa Philosophiae*, t. III, pt. 1, *Metaphysica* (Parisiis: A. Blot, 1938), pp. 221 sqq.

[6] St. Thomas Aquinas, *Sum. Theol.*, I, 2, 1, *Resp.* The qualifications of St. Thomas' remark will be given by him later. See p. 155.

What Proof Is Not

EXAMPLES OF DEFECTIVE PROOFS: ST. AUGUSTINE'S

As we have seen, St. Thomas Aquinas rejected the Augustinian proof of God's existence from eternal truth. Not that St. Thomas denies that God may be proved from eternal truth. He may be so proved, and St. Thomas does it, but not in the Augustinian way. The kernel of St. Augustine's proof is that certain truths transcend things and our mind, and therefore these truths are transcended by God. St. Thomas contends that eternal truths do not transcend our mind or things; nevertheless we cannot understand the being-content of those truths as existing or having the capacity to exist, *i.e.*, we cannot understand the being there is in eternal truths, except we understand it as derived from a cause which makes them to exist (if they do exist) or which is able to make them to exist (if they are merely able to exist).

ST. ANSELM'S PROOF

The suppositions latent in Augustinism became apparent in St. Anselm's attempted proof of God. Anselm argued: God is that than which a greater cannot be thought; but that than which greater cannot be thought exists; for if it did not exist, it could be thought to be greater, namely, by way of thinking of it as existing; therefore God exists.[7]

This argument according to St. Thomas confuses the necessity we are under of *thinking* that God exists if we think of Him as of one than whom no greater can be thought, with the necessity of His *existing*. For even granted that God be thought of as a "than whomer," it does not follow therefrom that such a being exists except in our *thinking*. You cannot argue that God exists in fact unless in fact there *is* one than whom no greater can be thought, and that precisely is the point in question.[8]

St. Thomas is saying that you must not confuse conceived existence with real existence. Nor will it do, he pursues, to urge that since existence is a necessary predicate of God, therefore God exists. Certainly existence is a necessary predicate of God: *God exists* is of itself a necessary proposition, but *we* do not know that it is, apart from proof. In this and all other forms of ontological arguments there is a confusion of the significance or meaning of being with being itself.

---

[7] St. Anselm, *Proslogion*, I–XIX (PL 158, coll. 223–235).

[8] St. Thomas Aquinas, *Sum. Theol.*, I, 2, 1, obj. 2, et ad 2.

Let us reveal this confusion. That the proposition *x must exist* means what it says is obvious; all significant propositions mean what they say. Equally obvious is it that one who thinks *x must exist* must *think x must exist.* Nevertheless the necessity of *x*'s being does not follow from the necessity of our thinking *x must be*, not unless that necessity of our thinking *x must be* is caused by the necessity of *x*'s being. Since we do not know God—the *x* in this case—the only way in which the necessity of *x*'s being could cause our thinking that *x must be* would be as follows: there is *y;* now *y* could not be unless *x* were; therefore there is *x*. That would be proof.

There was nothing in the instance to stop Anselm from proffering that proof. But he did not proffer it. Apparently he thought that the necessity of our thinking that God must exist was a datum, and it surely is in one who believes. To one however who wishes to *know* if God exists, the proposition, *a necessary being must exist*, has only significance; it is not and cannot be an assertion that what is signified actually exists. In order to move from the signified to the existence of what is signified, we must either prove, or be confronted with the evidence of existence.

DESCARTES' PROOF

Descartes reasserted the ontological argument thus: What we clearly understand to pertain to the nature of something can be affirmed with truth of that thing. Now, it is of the nature of God to exist. Hence, it can be truly affirmed of God that He exists.[9] Concerning Descartes one might observe (1) that if his "clear idea" of

[9] Descartes, *Meditationes de Prima Philosophia, Secundae Responsiones;* ed. Adam-Tannery, Vol. VII, p. 150. Vd. *op. cit.*, Vol. IX, p. 117.

God, as a being to which existence pertains, does not come to him from contingent beings, then *their* existence, not God's, must be proved. Descartes knew it, and he tried to prove the existence of things. As everyone knows, he failed. (2) Since his failure was essential, not accidental, to his task—how indeed can one prove from ideas, which come from things, the things which are supposed to come from ideas?—it seems best to write off the Cartesian attempt as just another false platonising start. We can indeed conceive a nature to which existence pertains. Nevertheless the source of that conception is natures to which existence does *not* necessarily pertain, and the validation of that derived conception of a necessary being is, in the order of being, by proof. Descartes' major proposition is therefore ambiguous. If it means that existence is a necessary predicate of the nature of God in the dimension of significance, it is a true proposition; but it proves nothing. If it means that existence is a necessary predicate of the nature of God in the dimension of being, it is a true proposition; but it needs proof.

LEIBNIZ'S PROOF

Leibniz thought to improve Descartes' formulation of the ontological argument thus: if God is possible, He exists. But He is possible. Therefore He exists.[10] To this argument many realists reply that it cannot be known that God is possible before we know, by proof, that He exists. Thus they concede his major and deny Leibniz's minor proposition. The reply seems to concede the whole position of Cartesian essentialism. The authentic reply of realism is simply to deny Leibniz's major, as *he* understands it. Leibniz understands his major proposition thus: from the conception that a necessary being is possible it follows that a necessary being exists. It is not so. From the conception that a necessary being is possible, it follows only that a necessary being is *conceived* to exist and actually does exist in knowledge. Whether or not such a being exists in fact cannot be known from conceiving that He does. And if it be urged by pseudo-realists that, whatever Leibniz may have thought, at any rate *they* cannot conceive God as possible apart from proof, and hence Leibniz's major proposition is true as *they* understand it, the answer seems to be: certainly God can be conceived as possible before we know, by proof, that He exists. Why not? If a necessary being were impossible, *any* being would be impossible, because impossibility would then arise from being itself. That, at least, we know is impossible. Realism, on the other hand, would distinguish Leibniz's major, as understood by pseudo-realism, thus: if God is possible conceptually, He exists conceptually; if God is possible conceptually, He is not thereby known to exist really unless He be proved to exist.

---

[10] Leibniz, *New Essays Concerning Human Understanding*, tr. A. G. Langley (Chicago: The Open Court Publishing Co., 1916), IV, 10, pp. 499–511.

THE ESSENTIAL VICE OF ONTOLOGISTIC PROOF

There are many variants and modalities of the ontological argument.[11] The essential vice in all of them is the assumption that to be is to be an essence and that to know being is to know essence. Upon that assumption proof must consist in finding, somehow, all existential factors within the realm of essence, precisely because to be is to be an essence. In order to know God, essentialism adverts to the fact that His essence is to exist; whence, He exists. That assumption and its corollary have been contested in Chapters I and II for reasons which will be summarized immediately after the next sample of defective proof.

THE EXPERIENCE OF GOD

There is one more contestable assumption: that the experience of God is a proof of His existence. Many men have thought that there is no need to prove God's existence, because we in some sense know by experience that there is a God.

---

[11] St. Bonaventure, *In I Sent.*, d. 8, p. 1, a. 1, q. 2; ed. Quaracchi, t. I, p. 153; cf. *op. cit.*, t. V, p. 48. Spinoza, *Ethics* in *Spinoza's Ethics and "De Intellectus Emendatione,"* ed. E. Rhys in Everyman's Library (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1910), P. 1, def. 1 and 6, prop. 11, pp. 7–10. Scotus, *Opus Oxoniense,* I, d. 2, q. 2, a. 1, nn. 7, 8, 16; ed. Quaracchi, t. I, pp. 188–190, 195–197.

In time of sickness or sorrow, when confronted by nature in her more awesome moods, or while contemplating the beauties of art, there is in most of us a tendency to feel or to think we feel, the presence of something or someone who transcends this world. It would be strange indeed if, assuming there is a God, He did not from time to time make His presence, which is *intimior intimo meo*, felt. Indeed there seems little doubt that He does. To one who has such experiences proof no doubt seems a hollow certainty compared with the conviction born of his feeling. There is surely more feeling of conviction in the experience of God than there is in the proof of Him. Demonstration is necessarily a dry, hard, juiceless food compared with feeling. The only point at issue is whether or not such experiences prove anything. They prove not a thing. They can be the starting points of proof, but they are facts which are philosophically quite on the level with motion, causing, order, etc. Without denying, therefore, that God may be experienced, without underestimating the stature of experience as a starting point in the proof of God, it must be denied that experience alone is a proof of anything. It is a fact from which proof may start.

Summary and Conclusion of Chapters I and II

To summarize now the reasons why essentialism and its manner of proving have been contested: to be is to be an existent, actual or possible, and to know being is to know an existent, actual or possible. To know essence is to know what that is which exists or can exist. Whence, existentialist proof consists in seeing in an existent or its nature the grounds for asserting another existent or some further predicate of its nature. Proof thus reproduces in knowledge the caused sequence of being. Sometimes the causes in knowledge reproduce the causes as they are ordered in being: thus the knowledge of a cause may antecede the knowledge of its effect. That is also the sequence in being: causes precede their effects. This is *propter quid* proof. Sometimes the causes in knowledge reproduce only the logical order of causes: thus the knowledge of an effect antecedes the knowledge of its cause. That is not the sequence of causes in being: effects do not precede their causes in being. However there is a logical sequence here: the cause of knowing (*sc.*, the effect) is before the knowing that there is a cause. This is *quia* proof. As to the fact that God's essence is to exist, that is true, and we should know it to be true without proof, as essentialism contends we do, if it were the essence of God which caused our knowledge that His essence is to exist. But it is not the essence of God which does this—"concerning God, we do not know what He is." It is the being of things which leads us to infer the existence of one whose essence it is to exist.

In sum, there are two possible answers to this question: What is it for a thing to be? The first answer is: to be is to exist or to have the capacity to exist. This is the answer of existentialism. The second answer is: to be is to be that which a thing is. This is essentialism's answer. Corresponding to these there are two answers to the question: What is it to know being? Existentialism answers: to know being *conceptually* is to know that which exists or can exist; to know being *predicatively* is to affirm or deny that what is *signified* as that which exists or can exist, effectively *does* or *can* exist. Essentialism answers: to know being *conceptually* is to know that which signifies neither the act of existing nor the possibility thereof; furthermore, such conceptual knowledge does not exclude the act of existing or the possibility thereof; it simply prescinds from both; to know being *predicatively* is to affirm or deny being of the datum conceived. Lastly there are the two possible conceptions of proof, based upon the two possible conceptions of being and our knowledge thereof. Existentialism conceives proof to be the caused sequence of knowledge which reproduces the caused sequence of being, precisely because knowledge is of being. Essentialism conceives proof to be the analytical sequence of knowledges of essences, precisely because being is essence and knowledge is of essences. Such are the philosophical bases for holding on the one hand that God's existence must be proved, or on the other that His existence needs no proof, because it is evident. The trouble with the second alternative is that the knowledge it upholds is neither proved knowledge nor evident knowledge of being.

Suggested Reading

Quia *and* propter quid *proof:*

Aristotle, *Post. Analy.*, I, 13.

St. Thomas Aquinas, *Contra Gentiles*, I, 12; I, 25; *Sum. Theol.*, I, 2, 1–2; De Verit., X, 6; *De Pot.*, VII, 3.

Hoenen, P., S.J., *La théorie du jugement d'après St. Thomas d'Aquin*, Ch. VII.

Causality and proof:

Aristotle, *Post. Analy.*, II, 20; *Phys.*, III, 2–3; VII, 1 and 4; VIII, 5; *Metaph.*, II, 2; IV, 2 and 6; V, 2.

St. Thomas Aquinas, *In Phys.*, III, lect. 3; *In Metaph.*, IV, lect. 2 and 6; *Contra Gentiles*, I, 13; II, 16; III, 2; *Sum. Theol.*, I, 2, 3; I, 12, 12; I, 22, 2; I, 44, 1; I, 46, 2; I–II, 1, 4; *De Verit.*, II, 10.

The possibility of proving God's existence:

St. Thomas Aquinas, *In Boet. de Trin.*, I, 3; *Contra Gentiles*, I, 10–11; *Sum. Theol.*, I, 2, 1–2; *De Verit.*, X, 12.

De Raeymaeker, L., *Philosophie de l'être*, Sec. III, Ch. III.

Gilson, E., *Le Thomisme*, Ch. II.

The ontological argument:

St. Anselm, *Proslogion*, Prooemium and Chs. II–IV, IX.

St. Bonaventure, *In I Sent.*, d. 8, p. 1, a. 1, q. 2.

Scotus, *Opus Oxoniense*, I, d. 2, q. 2, a. 1, nn. 7, 8, 16.

Descartes, *Meditation V; Principles*, I, nn. 13–14.

Spinoza, *Ethics*, P. I, def. 1 and 6, prop. 11.

Leibniz, *Monadology*, nn. 44–45; *Discourse on Metaphysics*, Ch. I; *New Essays Concerning Human Understanding*, IV, 10.

De Raeymaeker, L., *Philosophie de l'être*, Sec. III, Ch. II.

Gilson, E., *Études sur le rôle de la pensée médiévale dans la formation du système cartésien*, Pt. I, Ch. I; Pt. II, Ch. III–IV; *The Unity of Philosophical Experience*, Chs. II, VII, VIII; *Being and Some Philosophers*, Chs. III–IV; *La liberté chez Descartes et la théologie; L'être et l'essence*, Ch. V; *La philosophie de saint Bonaventure*, Ch. III; *God and Philosophy*, Ch. III.

Maritain, J., *Le songe de Descartes*, Ch. IV; *Trois Réformateurs*, Ch. II.

III · GOD'S EXISTENCE CAN BE PROVED

Why Men Deny That God's Existence Can Be Proved

INTELLECTUAL MUTISM

The pure or limit position of those who deny that the existence of God can be proved is to make that denial without giving any reason for it. With such intellectual mutism there can be no argument.

AGNOSTICISM

Short of that position there are the following. Some men do not deny God's existence; they deny we can be sure of it. Others deny that we can be sure of God's existence by proof, but we can be sure of it, they assert, by faith or feeling. All these are agnostics,[1] men who professing not to know, think to retain nevertheless the advantages of knowledge.

Agnostics have this in common: they deny first principles, *e.g.*, the principle of being, of causality, of the good, the one, etc. Some agnostics deny first principles because, they maintain, first principles transcend experience and there is no knowledge which transcends experience. These are materialistic agnostics. Other agnostics hold that although there be knowledge of first principles, these first principles either cannot be known to be true except in the order of thinking, or they are known to be true only in the order of thinking. These are idealistic agnostics, critical or dogmatic. The agnostic position is logical enough once it be granted that there are no first principles in the order of being, for it is from these that anything is proved to be.

---

[1] Vd. M. Chossat, S.J., "Agnosticisme," *Dictionnaire apologétique de la foi catholique*, I, col. 25.

The Argument against Agnosticism

THERE ARE FIRST PRINCIPLES OF THINKING

The whole question, then, comes to this: (1) do we have knowledge of first principles, and (2) is this knowledge of first principles valid in the order of being? There is no real demonstration of either (1) or (2). As to the first, the only observation which can be made is this: if there be no knowledge which transcends experience, we cannot know there is not, because to know there is no such knowledge is knowledge which *itself* transcends experience. How indeed can one know, with knowledge which is on the level of experience, that there is no knowledge beyond experience if that knowledge, viz., that there is no knowledge beyond experience, is itself beyond experience? Aristotle had solemn fun with the nonsense which entertains strong notions about the unknowable.[2]

THERE ARE FIRST PRINCIPLES OF BEING

As to the second question, idealistic agnostics think that existence is a category of the mind: we must think that being is that which is or can be, and we must think all the principles which issue from that conception, together with all conclusions based upon it, but we really cannot say more than this—so it all most certainly seems.

THE ARGUMENT AGAINST KANT

Upon this supposition of idealism the so-called proof of God's existence from the contingency of being is no more than the ontological argument disguised. The ontological argument undisguised[3] fools no one, because it clearly passes from existence conceived to existence exercised. *A perfect being must exist* is the conclusion of the ontological argument, a conclusion drawn from the antecedent that if such a being did not exist he would not be perfect. The conclusion is unjustified—in this Kant was right—because it passes from the conception of a perfect being, in which conception existence is necessarily a conceptual element, to the existence of a perfect being. But who does not see, idealism contends, that the demonstration from contingency is but a masked form of the ontological argument? The conclusion of the argument from contingency is this: *a being which must exist is perfect, i.e.*, God. Convert that conclusion thus: *some perfect being must exist*. Since there cannot be any distinction between two perfect beings, the converse is equivalent to the following, *a perfect being must exist*. Now, that last proposition is identically the conclusion of the ontological argument, and since the truth or falsity of the convertend entails the truth or falsity of the converse, it follows that *a being which must exist is perfect* (the conclusion of the argument from contingency) is no truer than its convertend, *a perfect being must exist* (the conclusion of the ontological argument).[4]

---

[2] Aristotle, *Metaph.*, III, 3, 1005b 6–1006a 28.

[3] Cf. pp. 33 sqq.

Two observations may be made. First, *a being which must exist is perfect* (the conclusion of the argument from contingency) is *not* the converse of *a perfect being must exist* (the conclusion of the ontological argument). The reason is: the conclusion of the ontological argument concerns only existence *conceived* as necessary to the conception of a perfect being; and that is why the argument cannot conclude to an existence which is affirmed to be exercised. The so-called cosmological argument on the other hand concerns existence which is *proved* to be exercised. The *significance* of necessary existence cannot be converted with the *proved* exercise of necessary existence. A being whose necessary existence is proved is indeed perfect; but a perfect being *signified* as being necessarily existent is not the same as a being whose necessary existence is affirmed by *proof*, to be exercised.

---

[4] Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason, Transcendental Dialectic* in *Kant's Selections*, ed. T. M. Greene (New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1929), Bk. II, Ch. III, sec. V, pp. 252–258.

THE BASIC CONTENTION AGAINST IDEALISM

The second observation is more fundamental. An idealist will ask: how do you know the difference between signified existence and exercised existence: what distinguishes each from the other? The answer to that question will be quite unacceptable to any idealist. This, nevertheless, is realism's answer: we know the difference because, in the case of singular existents, we feel them; when it is a question of first principles, which are valid in the order of being, we know that they are valid there because they arise from our understanding of felt being; in the matter of proof, we know the difference because proof reproduces in knowledge the caused sequence of being.

Summary and Conclusion

The fundamental criterion is thus the evidence of the difference between thinking *a is* because it *is*, since we feel it, and simply thinking *a is*. There is no proof that *a is*, no proof that to see, touch, taste, etc., *a*, is to know that *a is*. All that is the starting point of proof. However, once it is established by sensation that *a is*, it can be established by proof that it had a cause, which we do not feel, or that it has an effect which we do not feel.

An idealist will not accept the answer that, in the order of being, there is a horse because we see it; that his four legs are necessarily not not-four; that since he runs there must be some reason (a cause) why he does, else *stans semper stabit*. In the order of thought, yes, there those answers are true; but in the order of being, maybe they are true and maybe not. Nothing much can be done about it. As Chesterton once remarked, such a one needs air, not argument. One who looks for a coefficient of existence which might so affect other factors of his knowledge as to guarantee by its presence or absence that those other factors exist or do not exist, such a one has got the cart before the horse. Our knowledge is not of, say, *man* plus or minus knowledge of his existence. Our knowledge is of a sensible perceived existent whose nature is abstracted, conceptually, from the sense data in which that nature is involved, and whose existence is affirmed or denied by a judgment which may be either mediated by a middle term, and so be proved, or unmediated, and so be evident or self-evident.

Suggested Reading

Kant's argument:

KANT, *Critique of Pure Reason, Transcendental Dialectic*, II, Chs. II–IV; *Transcendental Logic*, I, Ch. I.

Against agnosticism:

ARISTOTLE, *Metaph.*, III, 3.

CHOSSAT, M., S.J., "Agnosticisme," *Dictionnaire apologétique de la foi catholique*, I, coll. 25–76.

GARRIGOU-LAGRANGE, R., O.P., *Dieu, son existence et sa nature*, pp. 170–179.

GILSON, E., *The Unity of Philosophical Experience*, Ch. IX. *L'être et l'essence*, Ch. VI.

IV · HOW GOD'S EXISTENCE IS PROVED

How a Being Is Proved to Exist

ARISTOTLE'S EXAMPLE: THE PLANETS ARE NEAR

Aristotle proffers this reason as proof that planets are near: they do not twinkle. It is not, he remarks, because they do not twinkle that they are near; but because they are near they do not twinkle.[1]

The luminous simplicity of his remark may need a little refraction. We know planets are near because we know (1) they do not twinkle and (2) the not-twinkling is near. We do not know if the near is the not-twinkling. If we knew that the near is the not-twinkling, we should know what is the cause of planets' not-twinkling, and be able to prove with *propter quid* proof that planets do not twinkle *because* they are near. But the not-twinkling is not the cause of planets being near; it is the effect of something which is near, and that something which is near, though not necessarily its nearness, is the cause of not-twinkling. Thus, although we know planets are near because we know they do not twinkle, nevertheless the reason why we *know* they are near, viz., because they do not twinkle, is not the reason why they *are* near. We do not know why planets are near, nor do we know whether their nearness is the cause of their not-twinkling. We simply know planets *are* near for the reason given. Put it all together and it comes to this, as Aristotle said: planets are proved to be near, because they do not twinkle; yet the reason which *proves* they are near is not the reason why they *are* near; rather, the reason which *proves* they are near, viz., because they do not twinkle, is the reason why we *know* they are near, and that reason is the effect of something which is near. Whether or not it be the nearness of that which is near that is the cause of not-twinkling, we do not know without further examination. At any rate, something which is the cause of not-twinkling is proved to be near.

---

[1] Aristotle, *Post, Analy.*, I, 13, 78a 22.

Such is *quia* proof, proof that there is or exists a cause because there is or exists an effect. Let it be again noted that the effect is not the reason why there *is* a cause; rather, it is the reason why we *know*, by proof, there is a cause. And let it be further noted that the cause is proved to exist, even though we may not immediately know what it is in the cause which causes. Is it nearness? Or something else?

THE NOMINAL DEFINITION

Involved in these questions is the nature of a nominal definition. Let this be the syllogism: planets (S) are the not-twinkling (M); the not-twinkling (M) is near (P); planets (S) are near (P). The middle term is "the not-twinkling"; it is the *effect* of something near and the *cause* of our *knowing* that planets are near. Now, that middle term (the not-twinkling) is not assumed before the proof as a *real* definition of "the near," not assumed, *i.e.*, as the cause of "the near." If it could be so assumed, the near would be defined as the not-twinkling, and then we should know that planets are not-twinkling because they are near. That would be *propter quid* proof, proof from the cause to the effect. We do not, however, know the real definition of the cause *before* the proof of cause from effect; we know only that the not-twinkling is near. Maybe the near is defined by the not-twinkling and maybe not. At any rate the not-twinkling is near. Hence, "not-twinkling" is a nominal description of "the near" as of a cause; but it is a real subject of the near as a datum.

To define nominally may mean to define the etymology of a word. With this sort of nominal definition we are not concerned. To define nominally may also mean to define that to which a word is related as a sign to the signified. Thus, to one who asks what do you mean by "the near" you point to the "not-twinkling." *That* is what "the near" means, you say. The "not-twinkling" is the nominal definition of "the near"; "the not-twinkling" describes that to which ("the near") it ("the not-twinkling") is related as a sign to the signified. There is nothing "nominal" about the relation of "the not-twinkling" to "the near," nothing nominal about the "near not-twinkling." The near does *not* twinkle. The only thing nominal about the predicate is that it is a nominal *definition.* The predicate is true enough of the subject; only, the predicate is simply the common and true acceptation of the subject, an acceptation induced from experience and the basis of a real definition. A real definition, when possible, is a distinct manifestation of the nature of the subject either through genus and specific difference or through some substitute for genus and specific difference. Thus, in both nominal and real definitions the predicate is true of the subject; only, in a real definition the predicate describes the nature of the subject; in a nominal definition the predicate is either not the whole nature of the subject or not the essence of the subject at all. In the given case, the "not-twinkling" is the effect of *the near*, although whether or not it be the nearness of *the near* which is the cause of not-twinkling is an open question.

Once planets are proved to be near, because they do not twinkle, one may go on to inquire what it really is to be near, and thus determine if nearness is the cause of not-twinkling. But that question is subsequent to finding out if something is really near, and there is: planets, because they do not twinkle and the not-twinkling is near.

How God Is Proved to Exist

THE NOMINAL DEFINITION OF GOD

The nominal definition is involved in the proof of the existence of God. In proving cause from effect, St. Thomas tells us, you must take the effect in place of the definition of the cause if you are going to prove there *is* a cause.[2] This is especially true in proving the

[2] St. Thomas Aquinas, *Sum. Theol.*, I, 2, 2, *Resp.*, et ad 2.

existence of God. The way to prove that something exists is to take the meaning of its name without assuming that this meaning describes *what* the thing is, since the question as to what the thing is, is subsequent to finding out *if* it is. Whence, in proving God from His effects we start by asking what this name, God, means.[3]

THE NATURE OF THE PROOF OF GOD'S EXISTENCE

The perhaps tedious analysis of *quia* proof and of nominal definition seemed necessary in order to understand the proof of the existence of God. God exists, because He is the cause of the existence of things. That is the proof of God's existence.

First of all it is not, as Aristotle remarked concerning his proof about the nearness of planets, because things exist that God exists; it is because He causes them to exist that therefore they do exist. However, we *know* He exists because we know by proof that He causes them to exist, but that "because" clause does not express the reason why He exists; it is the reason why we *know* He exists. God does not have to cause things to be in order to exist Himself, no more than planets have to be not-twinkling in order to be near; but just as we know planets are near, because we know they do not twinkle, so we know God exists because we know He is the cause of the existence of things; and just as planets could be near without not-twinkling, so God would exist without causing anything else to exist.

Secondly, let us note that once it is proved that there exists a cause of the existence of things we may go on to inquire what is the nature of that cause. Recall the planets: we know they are near because we know they do not twinkle. Are planets not-twinkling because they are near? That is a fair but irrelevant question until we know planets *are* near. So in the case of God: we know He exists because we know His effects. Yet one may ask, what is the nature of the divine cause? It is a fair but irrelevant question until we know if He exists. Once we know that He exists we can go on to inquire what is the nature of that cause whose existence is proved.

[3] St. Thomas Aquinas, *Sum. Theol.*, I, 2, 2, obj. 2, et ad 2.

Thus, the proof of the existence of God starts with a nominal definition of God, "the cause of the existence of things," verifies His existence by the syllogism to be indicated, and then scrutinizes the nature of the cause whose existence is proved.

The syllogism which proves the existence of God is as follows. God (S) is the cause of the existence of things (M); the cause of the existence of things (M) exists (P); therefore, God (S) exists (P).

THE STRUCTURE OF THE PROOF OF GOD'S EXISTENCE

One may immediately protest that the proposition, *God is the cause of the existence of things,* is the very proposition to be proved and hence the so-called proof is no proof at all. If the objector is satisfied with the assurance that the proposition in question will be proved, well and good. It will be, and he will have his satisfaction. But he should not be quite satisfied with that assurance. The proof that *God is the cause of the existence of things* does not prove that He exists. It only proves that *He is the cause of the existence of things.* The proof of the existence of God is in the syllogism already stated: He is the cause . . . ; a cause exists. . . .

THE MIDDLE TERM OF THE PROOF

Another protest must be heard. The middle term of the syllogism which proves God's existence is this: the cause of the existence of things. Now, the middle term in *quia* proof is an effect, taken in place of the definition of the cause, *e.g.,* "not-twinkling" is taken in place of the definition of "the near." If, then, "the cause of the existence of things" be the middle term, how can it be the effect of God's causality? Is it not rather the cause itself?

Action is immanent or transitive. Immanent action perfects the operator, *e.g.,* seeing perfects the seer.[4] Transitive action perfects something external to the operator, as does the action by which fire heats water, or the action by which a carpenter makes a tablet from wood. The question is about the causal action of God which is in some sense transitive. The immanent action of God is not an effect of God, nor is it our middle term. On the other hand, in all potencies which, beyond their act or exercise, entail the production of something, their act or exercise is in the thing produced, as building is in the thing built, weaving in the woven, etc.[5] This is to say that transitive action *is* the effect as referred to its cause. As St. Thomas says: the action of God by which things are made is in the creature, and it is the dependence of a created thing upon the principle which fixes it in being. Clearly, creation in this sense, viz., the dependence of a creature upon God is a sort of thing (*res quaedam est*), an effect (*neque increata est*), and not created by any other relation.[6] In this sense "the cause of the existence of things" is an effect and it is our middle term: passive creation, this is creation considered in its term, is in a creature, and is a creature.[7] In sum, "the cause of the existence of things" may mean God Himself. If it does, it is not our middle term. "The cause of the existence of things" may also mean things as dependent upon God. In this sense, "the cause of the existence of things" is creatures, effects of God's creation, which are causes of our knowledge that God is their cause.

---

[4] St. Thomas Aquinas, *In Metaph.,* IX, lect. 8; ed. Cathala, n. 1865.

Why Quia *Proof Proves: Causality*

CAUSALITY

Is not this, however, to stretch the intelligibility of language to the breaking point? To identify a cause-causing with itself is comprehensible enough. To identify, howsoever partially, a cause-causing with its effect—that looks to be impossible. The problem is no doubt one of the most difficult in philosophy. Its answer may perhaps be best seen if it is put thus: we have an option between complete unintelligibility and partial intelligibility. It is completely unintelligible that there be effects without causes. It is a partially intelligible explanation of effects to explain them through their causes. Without causality one must resign oneself to knowing nothing scientifically. With causality one must be content with partial comprehension of the being which emanates from a cause.

---

[5] Aristotle, *Metaph.*, IX, 8, 1050a 23.
[6] St. Thomas Aquinas, *Contra Gentiles*, II, 18. Cf. *De Pot.*, III, 5.
[7] St. Thomas Aquinas, *Sum. Theol.*, I, 45, 3, ad 2.

¶ *Causality in change.* The option must be clarified. Causality is, first of all, the condition of the intelligibility of change, any change. Let cold water become hot. Here is something new (hot water) from something old (cold water). If the new is so new that it was not at all old, there is a discontinuity between cold and hot water which experience belies. On the other hand if the new is so old that it is not at all new, there is a continuity between cold and hot water which experience belies. Experience attests that it is the same water which is now hot, now cold; there is our continuity. Experience also attests that the cold water is not identically hot water; there is our discontinuity. The only way to preserve both the experienced continuity and the experienced discontinuity in change, and thus to make change intelligible, is to understand that cold water becomes hot, not because cold water *is* hot (for it is not), not by denying that cold water becomes hot (for it does), but by reason of something which is hot and which communicates its heat to the water. This communicative hot is a cause. Without it, change from cold water to hot is impossible: impossible, because cold water is not hot "on its own" ("on its own" it is cold); and without a cause, cold water does not become hot, by hypothesis, in virtue of anything else. Hence, without a cause, we must either identify the cold with the hot, and this is against our experience of discontinuity; or we must so separate the cold from the hot that there is no common factor between them which is now cold, now hot, and this is against our experience of continuity.

In sum, either a subject (water) of change is identical with the determination (hot) which change brings—and then there is no change—or it is not identical with that determination. If the subject (water) is not *identical* with the determination (hot) which change brings, it follows that it is not *by itself*, *i.e.*, by virtue of being cold water, that cold water becomes hot. If it is not by itself that cold water becomes hot, yet cold water becomes hot withal, it must become so by reason of *another*, viz., the hot. *Quidquid* *movetur ab alio movetur.*[8] Whatever changes owes its change to another.

¶ *Causality in limited beings.* Besides being a necessary condition for the intelligibility of change, causality is a necessary condition for the intelligibility of limited achievements or acts. Just as we cannot put together in our minds the fact of change and the denial of its causal source, so we cannot put together in our minds the limited achievements or acts of being and the denial of a causal source of those limited achievements.

A limited *achievement* or act is (1) any actuality whatsoever, provided it be already achieved and not, as in change, in the process of achievement; (2) an achievement which is not the achievement of all that being can be. For example, John's being-a-man is an achievement, not a change; nor is being-a-man the achievement of all that being can be—there are other beings besides man. So also John's existing is an achievement of John, yet John is not George.

Now, whether one speak of changing or of limited beings, in either case the reason which makes causality necessary to explain change makes it also necessary to explain limited achievements. We cannot put together in our minds the fact that John exists, say, and the denial that he exists for some reason, a cause, other than John himself. Try to put together John, who exists, and such a denial. You must then say that, since there is no reason for John's existing other than John himself, John is identical with "existing." It is not so. To think so lands us into saying that to exist is to be John, and *that* is flatly impossible if there is also George, and if John may or may not exist. The reason why it is impossible is this: if to-be is identified with to-be-John, then George could not get inside, nor could John get outside, the pale of existence. Thus, the same reasons which make causality necessary to explain change make it also necessary to explain why a being which is actual, but not actual so as to be identified with its act, *is* actual. *De potentia non potest aliquid reduci in actum nisi per aliquod ens in actu:* nothing can be reduced from potency to act except by some being in act.

Thus it is that unless we understand change and the achievements of limited beings in terms of a cause of both of them, we cannot understand anything at all. The world becomes unintelligible except in terms of causes.

---

[8] Vd. Aristotle, *Phys.*, VII, 1, 241b 24; VII, 4, 254b 30.

On the other hand, causes give us only a partial comprehension of changes and achievements. Assume that a germ is the cause of a given disease. Three problems are thereby solved: (1) The problem why there *is* a disease rather than not is solved, since the efficient cause, the germ, is such a reason; (2) The problem why the efficient cause "ups and causes" rather than not is solved, because the final cause, which is the disease-to-be, determines the efficient cause to act rather than not to act; (3) The problem why the disease is of *this* sort and not of *another* sort is solved, since in the efficient cause is preinscribed the intelligible contours of the effect. Thus, (1) that there *be* an effect, (2) that the *existence* of the effect be intentionally preinscribed in the *activity* of the cause, (3) that the effect be of the *kind* it is because the effect's nature is preinscribed in the *nature* of the cause; all are explained by efficient, final and exemplary causality respectively.[9] There is lacking to such an explanation of an effect only the complete intelligibility of the effect in itself. In itself an effect is only partially intelligible, precisely because its explanation lies partly outside itself, namely, in its cause.

We are thus confronted with the intelligible mystery of causality: cause and effect must be one, else there is no explanation of change and achievement; cause and effect must be different, else there is no effect and therefore nothing to explain.

First, cause and effect must be one. Consider the data: cold water truly becomes hot (change), and hot water truly is hot (limited achievement). Consider, secondly, the relation of these data to their cause: it is due to the cause that there are the data. Put the two, the data and their relation to their cause, together. The hot which is the cause must, short of being *identical* with the effect, be *in* the effect. The contrary is also true: the hot which is in the effect must, short of being identical with the cause, be *from* the cause.

In sum, it is a startling explanation of why water becomes hot to be told that it becomes hot because it *is* hot. It is *not*. If water becomes hot, the reason must be because something hot (*not* the water in question) is communicating its heat to the water with the result that the heat of the water is 1° *from* the communicating hot, 2° *in* the water.

---

[9] See pp. 90 sqq.

Here then is the paradox of causality: the unity of different factors in a composite of change (water-becoming-hot) or of achievement (water-being-hot) is explained by a factor disunited from, *and* united with, that composite. Let there be change or achievement. That change or achievement belongs both to the agent (cause) and to the patient (effect): it belongs to the agent as being *from* it, to the patient as being *in* it.[10]

SUMMARY OF THE VALIDATION OF QUIA PROOF

The preceding reflections upon causality are offered, not as proof of causality—causality is not proved. It is seen as being the necessary condition of the intelligibility of change and limited achievements of being. They are proposed rather in order to let us see what we are up against. We are up against this: if we deny causality, changing and limited beings become utterly unintelligible; if we admit causality, changing and limited beings are only partially intelligible in themselves, precisely because part of their explanation lies in their causes. Effects are not self-explanatory. They are explained in part by their causes, yet they are not to be so explained by their causes as to be explained away. If the relation of effect to cause, or of cause to effect, is this: because *A is* therefore *B is*, it is obvious that *B* is intelligible in terms of *A*, and it is equally obvious that if the intelligibility of the second factor, be it cause or effect, is totally absorbed by the intelligibility of the first, there is no second factor at all. On the other hand, to deny that the second factor *is* explained by the first, is to deny that the second factor is explainable. Here, then, are the pure positions: an explanation through causes, no explanation at all, or an explanation which explains away the thing to be explained. The last two members are the same.

---

[10] St. Thomas Aquinas, *Contra Gentiles*, II, 16: . . . actus enim agentis ut a quo, est patientis ut in quo . . . ipsa enim actio agentis in patiente recepta est actus patientis ut forma . . . in ipso. Cf. *Sum. Theol.*, I–II, 90, 3; Aristotle, *Phys.*, III, 3, 202a 13; 202b 10.

What Quia *Proof Proves*

QUIA PROOF PROVES THE EXISTENCE OF A CAUSE

If one favors an explanation over none at all, the question next arises: What exactly does it mean to prove the *existence* of a cause? It certainly does not mean to show, analytically, that there is a necessary relation between participated being and a cause of participated being. *That* is self-evident: "such a being [*i.e.*, one which is being by participation] cannot be, except it be caused, just as a man cannot be unless he be mirthful."[11] To prove the existence of a cause is to see, not merely that an effect is able not-to-be, and hence *if* it exists must have a cause; it is to see that an effect which *does* exist, would *not* exist if there were no cause of it.[12]

To prove the existence of a cause, therefore, is simply to see two things: (1) there *are* participated beings which (2) would not be if there were no cause of them. To see point (2) alone does not prove that there exists a cause. The issue of point (2) is that participated beings would not be unless there were a cause of them. *That* is a principle which is self-evident to anyone who grasps its terms. Yet that principle does not reveal either that there *are* participated beings or that they *are* caused, because they are not caused before they exist.

It is not the fact that beings are *participations* which demands a cause of them. Participation means only a certain grade of being: being which is in the process, or the state, of limited achievement. Hence, to repeat, it is not *because* beings are *participations* that they are caused or can be caused. Concretely, it is not *because* a being is, say, a fish that it is caused. Rather it is *because* participations are *beings*, existent or able to exist, that they demand a cause. Concretely, it is because a fish exists or can exist that it demands a cause.

[11] St. Thomas Aquinas, *Sum. Theol.*, I, 44, 1, ad 1.
[12] St. Thomas Aquinas, *Sum. Theol.*, I, 44, 1, ad 2.

> Though its relation to a cause does not enter into the *definition* of a being which is caused, nevertheless it is consequent upon what pertains to its *being;* because from the fact that something is *being* by participation, it follows that it is caused by another.[13]

The proof of the existence of a cause, therefore, lies in seeing that (1) participated beings *do* exist; (2) they could not exist without an existent cause of them.

QUIA PROOF OF GOD PROVES THE EXISTENCE OF A CAUSE OF EXISTENCE

The proof of the existence of God adds to those propositions (1) and (2) only the knowledge that the cause, whose existence has been demonstrated by them, is the cause of the existence of the data given in proposition (1). The original question, indeed, was: Why *are* there participated beings? To answer that question by saying: there are participated beings because they are caused, and therefore there exists a cause of such beings, is true enough. Nevertheless, that answer does not fully reveal the existence of God unless and until it is seen that nothing short of a cause of *existence* will account for the existence of that whose *existence* is caused.

Summary

We may now resume the steps of the proof. We must first assent to proposition (1): *there exist participated beings.* That being exists is evident from experience; that the being which exists is a participant of being is evident from the fact that being is many and that any one being changes. Things exist, they change, and even when we view them as achieved and not-changing, none of them is without limitation. We must next assent to proposition (2): *these participated beings cannot exist without an existent cause of them.* Note what we are assenting to here. We are not assenting merely to the principle of causality, viz., *no participated being can exist without a cause.* We are assenting to this proposition: *these observedly existent beings cannot exist without an existent cause of them.* Assenting to that last proposition, we are assenting to the principle of causality *and* to the proposition that there exists a cause, because there *exist* the data—since we know those data exist. Lastly, (3) we must assent to the proposition that *the cause in question cannot be other than a cause of existence,* because such a cause alone accounts for the existence of a participated being whose existence *is* caused. The three propositions might be put thus: (1) there are data (2) which come from antecedents; now if all those antecedents are themselves anteceded, there is no true antecedent, nor consequently any data. Now, there *are* the data. Whence, (3) there is an unanteceded antecedent, a cause of the existence of the consequents.

---

[13] St. Thomas Aquinas, *Sum. Theol.*, I, 44, 1, ad 1. I have underlined and also retouched the standard translation. The standard translation of *quae sunt de eius ratione*, namely: *what pertains to its essence*, does not seem felicitous. The antecedent of *eius* is *entis*. Consequently the expression *de ratione eius* (*scil., entis*) is simply "being." This interpretation seems confirmed by what follows: *ex hoc quod aliquid per participationem est ens*. St. Thomas is saying that the *ratio entis*, which demands to be caused, lies in this, that something is *being* by participation. He is not saying, as the standard translation seems to suggest, that the *ratio entis* by reason of which a being must be caused, is essence. Dr. Anton C. Pegis, *Basic Writings of St. Thomas Aquinas* (New York: Random House, 1945), Vol. I, p. 427, has a very acceptable translation: "what belongs to its nature" (*scil.*, the nature of being).

The task now is to generate the assents to these propositions, particularly to (2) and (3).

Suggested Reading

Nominal definition:

Aristotle, *Post. Analy.*, I, 13.
St. Thomas Aquinas, *Sum. Theol.*, I, 2, 2.
Jolivet, R., *Traité de philosophie*, Vol. III, pp. 350–352.

Immanent and transitive activity:

Aristotle, *Phys.*, II, 3; *Metaph.*, IX, 6; IX, 8; *De Anima*, I, 3; III, 7; *Nic. Ethics*, VII, 14.
St. Thomas Aquinas, *In Phys.*, VIII, lect. 9; *Contra Gentiles*, II, 13; II, 18; II, 23; II, 57; *Sum. Theol.*, I, 18, 3; *De Pot.*, III, 5.
De Raeymaeker, L., *Philosophie de l'être*, Sec. III, Ch. III.
De Tonquédec, J., S.J., *La critique de la connaissance*, Ch. II.

SIMON, Y., *Introduction à l'ontologie du connaître de la connaissance*, Chs. II–III.

Causality and proof:

ARISTOTLE, *Phys.*, III, 3; VII, 1 and 4; VIII, 5; *Metaph.*, II, 2.

ST. THOMAS AQUINAS, *Contra Gentiles*, I, 13; II, 16; III, 2; *Sum. Theol.*, I, 2, 3; I, 12, 12; I, 44, 1; I, 46, 2; I–II, 1, 4; *De Verit.*, II, 10.

DE RAEYMAEKER, L., *Philosophie de l'être*, Sec. III, Chs. I–II.

V · THE GENESIS OF THE ASSENT TO THE PROOF OF GOD

The Ways and Proof

THE DIFFERENCE OF THE WAYS

There are many ways to see by proof that God exists. Each way differs from each other in that, first, the immediate starting point of each way differs from the immediate starting point of each other and, secondly, the immediate terminus of each starting point is the proved existence of a cause so qualified as to account for the qualification of the respective data involved. Thus, motion is from a First *Mover*, causality from a First *Cause*, etc.

THE SAMENESS OF THE WAYS

However, all the ways of proving God's existence are the same in that they all move from their immediate terminus, which is within a category of being, to a terminus which is outside any category of being, namely, to a being whose essence is to exist.

THE REASON FOR THE DIFFERENCE OF THE WAYS

The reason for the difference of the ways, each from the other, is obvious. To each different datum with which each way starts there corresponds a proper cause of that datum, that is, a cause which is like its effect.[1] To motion there corresponds a First Mover, to causality there corresponds a First Cause, and so on. Now it is clear that each datum differs. So too must differ, according to the difference of the datum, the cause of it. True it is that if one stopped proving at that point in each of the ways, one would have demonstrated the existence of a First Cause of each category of a First Cause's effects. Yet, precisely, in stopping *there*, one has left the First Cause also within the category of its effects. Thus we should have to conclude either that there are many First Causes—since the effects are many—or else that we really do not know whether the First Causes are one or many, though we do know they exist. In neither case would we have reduced multiplicity to unity. For, to say that there are many beings because there are many First Causes of them is simply to reassert the problem of multiplicity in different terms: instead of asking why there are many beings, we should be asking why there are many causes.

---

[1] On *proper* causality see below, pp. 90 sqq.

THE REASON FOR THE SAMENESS OF THE WAYS

The ways of proving God's existence are the same precisely insofar as they all move from their different, immediate termini, that is, from the existence of a First Cause so qualified as to account for the qualification of its effect, to the same ultimate terminus, which is Pure Being, one unqualified by any categorization whatsoever. This each way must do, because "if the words *God is good* signified no more than, *God is the cause of good things*, it might in like manner be said that God is a body, inasmuch as He is the cause of bodies." [2] Assuredly He is the cause of bodies in the same way as He is the cause of good things. Whence, when it is said, *God is good*, the meaning is not merely that He is the cause of goodness, but that this name applies to Him in a more excellent way. If this last were not so, then the name *good* applied to God would include in its meaning the creature's goodness.[3] The same applies to the name *being*. If being (the act of existence) did not apply to God differently from the way it applies to His effects, we should have included

[2] St. Thomas Aquinas, *Sum. Theol.*, I, 13, 2, *Resp.*

[3] St. Thomas Aquinas, *Sum. Theol.*, I, 13, 6, *Resp.*

in *His* being the meaning of *creatures'* being. Now this is not to prove that *God* exists; it is to prove that something like a creature exists.

Besides the reasons just given for the difference and the unity of the ways to prove God, there are the following textual considerations. First, there is the very word *way*. So far as I know, St. Thomas never calls a way a proof or a proof a way. Apparently, then, there are various ways to one proof of the *Ipsum esse*. True, one might say that there are various proofs of the existence of a First Cause, which in fact *is* the *Ipsum esse;* but that the First Cause is the *Ipsum esse* is not proved by *different* proofs. That this is so is suggested, secondly, by St. Thomas' conclusion in each of the ways. If the ways were as many different proofs, it would seem that St. Thomas' conclusion in each way ought to be: therefore God exists. The conclusion of each way, however, is not that one. It is: therefore there exists one "whom everyone understands to be God," "whom all name God," "whom all call God," "whom we call God," "this we call God." This suggests that over and above the conclusion in each way there must be a reflection upon that existent to which we have come, in order to see that it is the *Ipsum esse*. If such a reflection were not necessary, St. Thomas should obviously conclude, not that "there exists one whom everyone understands to be God," but: God exists.

Lastly, the middle term of all demonstrations concerning the nature of God, the *Ipsum esse* or its equivalent, is constantly plucked from its source in Question 2, article 3, *utrum Deus sit*. Surely the *Ipsum esse* could not be drawn from Article 3 unless it were there.

All these philosophical and textual considerations seem to point to the fact that there are many ways to see one proof, or if one prefers, that there are many proofs of a First Cause of any category of effects, but only one proof of a First Cause which is not in any of the categories of its effect.

The Proof Is from Causality

THE PER SE CAUSE

There remain some clarifications to make before stating the five ways: first, the clarification of a per se cause. In order accurately to understand a per se cause we had best take a fresh start from the general principle of causality.

Aristotle affirmed precisely what Parmenides denied: there is plurality; there is change.[4] There were, Aristotle thought, only two suppositions under which his assertions could stand up.

¶ *First supposition.* There must be between being and nothing the principle of passive potency. Let wax be modeled. *Before* it is modeled it is *not* modeled. After it is modeled it *is* modeled. Now, modeled wax cannot come from nothing, because from nothing comes nothing; nor can modeled wax be unmodeled wax, because nothing comes into existence which already *was* in existence. There must, therefore, be some factor in the wax-to-be-modeled which is not-modeled, yet is not nothing either. That factor is passive potency, unmodeled-wax-able-to-be-modeled. The fatal misunderstandings of this principle of passive potency are two: (1) to conceive unmodeled-wax-able-to-be-modeled as in *some way* modeled; (2) to conceive unmodeled-wax-able-to-be-modeled as a *pure* negation of modeled wax—to conceive it, *i.e.*, as nothing at all in relation to modeled wax. The proper understanding of the principle of passive potency is this: (1) unmodeled-wax-able-to-be-modeled is *not* modeled, but (2) unmodeled-wax-able-to-be-modeled is not a pure negation of modeled wax in the sense that it *is* not and *cannot be* modeled. If unmodeled wax were a pure negation, a total denial, of the modeled wax, it would make no difference to the unmodeled wax even if, by an impossible hypothesis, it became modeled; precisely because, in that impossible hypothesis, it could not have been modeled. Whence, modeled wax must come from unmodeled wax, not because modeled wax *is* unmodeled—it isn't—, nor because unmodeled wax cannot be modeled—it can—, but because unmodeled-wax-is-able-to-be-modeled. This is the principle of passive potency.

---

[4] Aristotle, *Phys.*, I, 2, 185b sqq.; 201b 19; St. Thomas Aquinas, *In Phys.*, III, lect. 2.

¶ *Second supposition.* The principle of passive potency must be completed by the principle of active potency or efficient causality. The surplusage of difference between modeled and unmodeled wax cannot come from passive potency *alone*, because, *alone*, passive potency *is not* its actuation. Whence, then, comes that surplus difference which *must* come if there is to be change? Not, certainly, from nothing; from something, then, which explains that surplus because it *is* that surplus. This something is active potency, the "other" in the axiom "whatever is moved is moved by another."

Here precisely is the area at which the notion of a per se cause enters.[5] This "other" which explains the surplus difference because it *is* the surplus difference, must be pre-orientated to act in a definite way so as to produce a definite effect, because the quality of an action and its effect can no more be indefinite than can a being be indefinite, a being of no particular sort whatsoever. Thus, in order to explain the *nature* of the effect, that is, in order to explain why the effect is, say, white instead of black, you must run an intelligible line to the *nature* of the action which produces the effect, a whitening action, say; and in order to explain the *nature* of the action which produces the effect, you must run an intelligible line from the nature of the action to the nature of the agent, a whitening agent, say. This phase of a per se cause is expressed by the axiom: *every agent produces its like.* That is the principle of proper causality.

Furthermore, this "other" must be pre-orientated to act rather than not to act, else you cannot assert activity. Now, there *is* activity. Things "up and do." Further, if the "doing" of things is not they (a man's thinking is not a man), it follows that there is some reason which pre-orientates agents to act before they do act. This reason is the principle of finality: *every agent acts because of an end.*

To illustrate both principles, let there be music. Why music and not billingsgate? Because there is a musician involved and not a fishwife. The *nature* of the agent, a musician, explains the *essential* pre-orientation of action and its effect. Next, why *is* there music rather than not? (Musicians are not their music; they do not always play.) Because an *existential* pre-orientation to play music rather than not to play explains the *existence* of music. A per se cause is thus one which explains (1) why an effect and the action which produces it are of the *sort* they are, and the explanation is: because an agent produces an effect *like* itself; (2) why there *is* the effect rather than not, and the explanation is: because the agent is pre-orientated to *produce* the effect.

---

[5] Aristotle, *Phys.*, II, 796b 10; *Post. Analy.*, I, 4; St. Thomas Aquinas, *In Phys.*, III, lect. 2; *In Metaph.*, V, lect. 3; *In Post. Analy.*, I, lect. 10; *Sum. Theol.*, I, 2, 3.

THE ACCIDENTAL CAUSE

The notion of a per se cause may be further clarified by contrasting a per se cause with an accidental cause (*causa per accidens*). An accidental cause is one which is either not like an effect, or not pre-orientated to act rather than not to act. To illustrate the accidental cause which is not like the effect, let a musician build a house. The reason why it is a house which is built is not because the man is a musician. His being a musician simply happens to be a characteristic of one who is a house-builder; his being a musician is a characteristic which is conjoined with the really causal characteristic of being a house-builder. Thus, the per se cause of house-building is properly a house-builder. The *per accidens* cause of house-building, which is the characteristic conjoined to the per se cause, is the musician. Sometimes accidental causes are unlike their effects, not because they are conjoined to a per se cause (as musician is conjoined to house-builder), but because an accidental effect, of which they are the accidental causes, is conjoined to a per se effect, of which they are the per se causes. For example, I cut a string which suspends a bob. I am the per se cause of the per se effect, which is the cutting of the string. To this per se effect there is conjoined another effect, viz., the falling of the bob. I am the accidental cause of the falling of the bob. Just so, a house-builder is the accidental cause of the house's destruction by fire; a tyrant is the accidental cause of the patience of a martyr. All these effects simply attach themselves to the per se effects which the per se causes are calculated to produce, and of these attached effects the agents are said to be accidental causes. To illustrate, lastly, the accidental cause which lacks the pre-orientation to act, rather than not, so as to produce the effect: let a man by chance find treasure in a field. To find treasure is not his purpose in digging, it is not the reason which is explicative of his *activity* of digging. That activity would have been fully explicable and consummated without his finding anything. He had no intention of digging for *that* purpose. Lacking such a determinant of his action, viz., the intention of finding treasure, he is the accidental cause of its discovery.

SUMMARY OF PER SE AND ACCIDENTAL CAUSALITY

To resume, the per se cause is one which is integrated by two determinants: the determinant by which it will act along definite lines if it acts at all; the determinant by which it will act rather than not, along those definite lines. The principle of proper causality expresses the necessity of the first determinant, and that principle is, *omne agens agit sibi simile*. The principle of final causality expresses the necessity of the second determinant, and that principle is, *omne agens agit propter finem*. To put the two determinants together, a being fixed upon acting according to the directive contours of its nature, *that* is a per se cause. An accidental cause is one which lacks either the first determinant (*propria forma*) or the second (*proprius finis*). To illustrate once more: a musician is a per se cause of music, an accidental cause of building a house; a house-builder is a per se cause of building a house, an accidental cause of the house's destruction by fire; a man's intention to take a walk is the per se cause of his walking, an accidental cause of meeting a long lost friend.

THE INSTRUMENTAL CAUSE

The next thing to clarify before stating the five ways is an instrumental cause. An instrumental cause, *e.g.*, the carpenter's saw or the painter's brush, itself possesses an essential determinant of its action, so far forth as it is an instrument of a certain kind. A saw will not do a brush's job, nor a chisel's. This determinant is the power proper to the instrument (*virtus propria instrumenti*). No instrument lacks such a determinant. However, the power proper to the instrument will not alone suffice as a complete essential determinant of its activity. The reason for a further essential determinant of an instrument's proper power is this: instruments must be applied to their activity. The general kind of job they can do is not explicative of the particular sort of job they actually do when they are put to work. This further, complementary determinant of an instrument's activity comes from another cause which is called the principal cause. Thus, it is due to the carpenter that his saw, which will saw (*propria virtute*), but not (*propria virtute*) saw wood, does saw wood (*virtute causae principalis*). The essential determinant of instrumental activity is therefore made up of two factors: the power of the instrument, and the power of the principal cause; the power of the instrument determines the general kind of activity peculiar to the instrument (sawing), and the power of the principal cause determines the particular sort of job the instrument is put to do (sawing wood).

Moreover, an instrument, just as any cause, needs an existential determinant of its activity, some reason which explains why it acts rather than not. This existential determinant of an instrument's activity comes solely from the principal cause. Instrumental causes, then, contribute to their effects only the determinant of the kind of effect you might expect to come from the kind of instrument they are. The particular job they actually do as well as the actual doing of that job are derived from the power and intention of the principal agent. Lastly, the power of the principal cause cannot reside permanently in the instrument, else the instrument would cease to be an instrument and become itself a principal cause. To fix, now, the matter by a definition, an instrumental cause acts, according to a power proper to itself, in virtue of a further power impermanently communicated to it by another, the principal agent; or one might say that an instrument causes by being moved to cause by another cause, in order to produce the form of the principal cause, as a brush is moved by a painter in order to express the painter's art.

Instrumental causes are no less efficient than are principal causes. Only, they are efficient in a different way. Efficient principal causes act, not in virtue of a power impermanently communicated to them by another cause, but on their own power. They are "movents" whose motion of other things issues from themselves, *e.g.*, a parent is such a cause of the generation of his progeny. Efficient instrumental causes, however, are movents whose motion of other things does not issue wholly from themselves: their motion of other things issues from their own power as instruments and from the power and intention of the principal cause. They pass along the motion they receive. Should an efficient principal cause need to be moved from its state of inactivity to activity by another cause (a first cause), the while the activity to which it is moved still remains its own activity, this would not turn an efficient principal cause into an instrumental cause univocally like other instrumental causes. It would simply indicate that the efficient principal cause in question is a *second* cause and an instrumental cause only analogically. Moved from inactivity to activity by a First Cause, as we shall see, the second principal cause would still be a principal one, because its activity would still be its own. True, the activity of a second principal cause is not identical with it—and that is why a second principal cause needs a First Cause, namely, in order to effect the juncture of the activity of a second principal cause to that second principal cause,—but it would be its own, just as a man's wisdom is not identical with him, though it is *his own* wisdom when he becomes wise. On the other hand, the activity of instrumental causes is not their own, except inasmuch as they operate *propria virtute instrumenti;* it is the activity of a principal cause (First or second) which runs through them into their effects.

The insight involved here needs fuller explanation obviously. Nevertheless it must be mentioned if only to fix our terms now. An instrumental cause moves another by a motion which it has passively received from another and which is passed along through it to an effect, as in bumping balls. A principal cause moves another by a motion of which it is the source. If the motion, of which a principal cause is the source, is identically the operant, the principal cause is a First Cause. If the motion, of which the principal cause is the source, is not identically the operant but is joined to the operant by another cause (the while the operation truly belongs to the operant), such a motion is the motion of a second principal cause. The reasoning back of these nominal definitions is briefly as follows. So far as operation is not identically an operant, in that far the principle of causality demands that the operation of an operant have a cause of the juncture of operation to operant. Now, if the operation is so joined to the operant that the operation cannot be said to be properly due to the operant, the causality is instrumental. No one, *e.g.*, can say that the total source of Shakespeare's plays was the tip of his pen. If, on the other hand, the operation is so joined to the operant that the operation, though not its juncture to the operant, can be said to be properly due to the operant, then the causality is principal causality. For example, no one can deny that *somebody* is the main source of Shakespeare's plays; nor can anyone assert that whoever wrote them was identically the writing of them. There had to be a reason for Shakespeare's writing, which reason was not Shakespeare; yet, whatever that reason, the plays are his. As to Shakespeare's pen, that was pushed, and was the vehicle of the expression of his plays.

Proof from a Series of Causes

SERIES OF PER SE AND ACCIDENTAL CAUSES

A last clarification before stating the five ways: when many causes concur to produce the same effect, we may name them a series and say that they are ordered. The order in any series of causes, that is, the relation of one cause to another, and of all to the effect, is twofold: essential and accidental. Essentially ordered causes are all per se causes: they possess the essential and existential determinants of their activity. It makes no difference how they possess these determinants. They might possess them as principal or as instrumental causes. At any rate they possess them. For example, a man, his hammer, etc., all concur to the effect of driving a nail. (The "etc." implies that it is not necessary to determine *all* the members of a per se series in order to determine that there are per se series.) Accidentally ordered causes are those which do not possess both of the two determinants of action. For example, the generative actions of all John's grandparents were not existentially determined to produce John, although they were essentially determined to produce human beings and existentially determined to produce their own progeny. Hence, all of John's grandparents are accidentally ordered to the effect of the generation of John. John's parents' activity was essentially and existentially ordered to the production of John. Again, all the causes of a musician's music are accidentally ordered to any effect which the musician may produce besides music, say, a house; they are accidentally ordered because they lack the essential determinants of the musician's action of house-building.

PER SE SERIES

Several remarks are in order here concerning each sort of series. First, since a series of per se causes possesses both determinants of operation, the essential determinant accounting for the *kind* of effect which issues from the corresponding kind of action and nature of the total agent, the existential determinant accounting for the *operation* of the total agent, it is self-evident that all the causes in a per se series must be actually operative simultaneously in order to produce the effect.

Secondly, since there are many causes in a per se series, the essential determinant of their operation, though present in the totality of their agency, is not present in all in the same way. This is to say that the causes in a per se series must differ in kind, else there would be no need for their being many: of two like causes, one could do what the other does. Their individual difference in kind, however, leaves intact their same essential determination as a total agent. A man driving a nail with a hammer—these are different causes, because they are many. Yet they all act from the *propria virtus* of one, the principal agent; each one's proper power as an instrument participates in the power proper to the principal cause.

Thirdly, since the members of a per se series are all actually in operation together upon an effect, they cannot be infinite in number. The reason is as follows. Actually operating causes exist. Their number therefore must be a determinate number, because the number of existents is a determinate number. Now an *infinite* number cannot be determinate, else it would not be infinite. Nor is an infinite number of existents determinable, else it could be determinate. Thus, since existent operators are a definite number of operators, and an infinite number cannot be definite nor, therefore, existent, it follows that the number of per se causes is finite.

Lastly, any series of per se causes must contain one and only one which is a cause and not at all an effect. The reason is this: if one alone is not exclusively a cause, there would be no series at all. Consider: the series must start, because it finishes, and it cannot start unless there be a starting point. Now, only an uncaused per se cause can be the starting point of a series of per se causes. To illustrate, a brush lays color on white canvas. Back of the brush is its handle, back of the handle is the hand, back of the hand is the arm, back of the arm is the man, etc. One gets nowhere in explaining the effect of colored canvas by lengthening the handle or the arm. The illustration, of course, fails in this: the per se cause which is exclusively a cause, cannot be indicated as you can indicate the brush, its handle, the arm, etc. Nevertheless the example makes this point: you cannot explain a series of per se causes of which *all* are caused causes—such a series has no starting point—and so, in order that there may be a starting point of a given per se series, there must be a per se cause which is exclusively a cause, even though you cannot point at it.

St. Thomas expresses the point just made thus: "here there can be no regress to infinity" (*hic non est procedere in infinitum*). His meaning is that where there is question of per se causes, which, let us recall, because they possess the two determinants of the kind of action they posit and the determinant of positing that kind of action, are *actually* operating (all this is expressed by the *hic*), when there is question of *such* causes, then their number is irrelevant. Irrelevant because, even if their number were infinite (it could not be, but let it pass), caused causes cannot initiate the activity whose effects we see and which, consequently, must be initiated. Whatever is caused starts from some other cause. Whence, in order to explain the origin of activity which *is* originated, there must be an unoriginated source of it, an uncaused cause. The number of caused causes has no more to do with the matter than the length of the brush which lays color upon canvas. No matter if the length of the brush extends to infinity (it could not, but let it pass), it is no explanation of the effect to say that the brush was infinitely long.

SERIES OF ACCIDENTAL CAUSES

A series of accidental causes could be potentially an infinite multitude.

A multitude is an unnumbered quantity of individuals. An infinite multitude is an innumerable quantity of individuals. As we have seen, an existent infinite multitude is an impossibility, because the number of existents is fixed, and an infinite number cannot be both infinite *and* fixed. A potentially infinite multitude of individuals, however, is possible on the condition that the string of individuals in it could never be run out. For, just as "the infinite is to be found potentially in the division of the continuous . . . in the same way the infinite can also be found potentially in the addition of a multitude." Just as there is an infinite possibility of the division of the continuous, but no possibility of infinite division, so there is infinite possibility of addition to multitude—but no possibility of infinite addition. Thus a potentially infinite multitude is one whose string of individuals cannot be run out, precisely because there is not any first or last individual on either end of the string: no first, to which there was no predecessor; no last, to which there will be no successor. Such a state of affairs is possible on one further condition: that the existence of the individuals in the string be successive, not simultaneous. The reason is: since successive individuals are not all actual existents, their number need not be fixed. Only existence fixes number. Now here, in a series of accidental causes, the hypothesis is that some of the string are inexistent.[6]

---

[6] Cf. St. Thomas Aquinas, *Sum. Theol.*, I, 7, 4, *Resp.;* I, 46, 2. God knows an actually infinite number (*De Verit.*, II, 9), but it is sophistical to conclude

A series of accidental causes can thus fulfill the requisite of a potentially infinite multitude. Accidental causes do not possess both the determinants of activity. Hence they are not all operating together, as are per se causes. Being inoperative, they can be inexistent. Being inexistent, they can be potentially infinite in number, because only the existent is finite in number.

To illustrate the matter, let John be generated by George, George by Peter, and so on. It is accidental to any *generating* member here that he have *been* generated by the preceding member. It is not because a man *is* generated that he generates; it is not, *i.e.*, because he is the *son* of another man that he is a generator. To be the son of another man is not to possess the determinant of the kind of action that issues from a generator. The only requisite needed, as an explanation of the kind of action that issues from a generator, is that there be a generator, *i.e.*, a man.[7] In order that there be a generator, it is not requisite that *his* generator be operative and hence an existent. Now, inexistent members of a series are not determined, and neither is their number.[8]

CONCLUSION CONCERNING SERIES

It follows that if a series of accidental causes, which is potentially infinite in multitude, demands a per se cause which is a cause alone

---

from God's knowledge of an actually infinite number to the possibility of an actually existent infinite number. The existent is fixed in number, and the fixed in number cannot be infinite *and* existent. It is also sophistical to argue against the potentially infinite number by *assuming* a first of such a series; the point to a potentially infinite number is precisely that there *is* no first of the series. Obviously no one can prove that there is such a series of individuals potentially infinite in number; but neither can anyone disprove its possibility.

[7] St. Thomas Aquinas, *Sum. Theol.*, I, 46, 2, ad 7.

[8] St. Thomas raises the question in *Sum. Theol.*, I, 46, 2, obj. 8, et ad 8: granted the existence of men from eternity, granted that men are generated, granted that human souls are immortal, granted that within infinite time there could have been infinite generations of men, would not all this prove that there would now be an actually existent infinite number of souls? An impossible conclusion. He answers: *if* such is the conclusion, then you cannot grant the possibility of *men* being from eternity; nevertheless, *angels* do not generate, and hence within infinite time there would not have been an actually existent infinite number of *angels*. Now, so he contends, the proposition was not that this or that *kind* of individual could be from eternity, *e.g.*, man, but that *some* creature could be from eternity, *e.g.*, angels.

and not at all an effect, nevertheless the multitude of the series' members, infinite or not, is irrelevant to this question: Is the series caused by an uncaused cause? The quantity of members of an accidental series has nothing to do with the question. If the accidental series *is* caused by an uncaused cause, the reason cannot be either of these: the series must start; the series has no start. The reason would have to be this: there is something, some factor, in the members which must be caused and which no member can cause. That would be a demonstration of a cause, exclusively such, of the accidental series. There is no question here and now of such a demonstration.

The only point to be made here and now is this: whether the quantity of members of a per se or accidental series of causes be infinite or not, whether their quantity could be infinite or not, the matter is totally irrelevant to the question: have those series a cause which is only a cause? True, the members of a per se series could *not* be infinite in number, and the members of an accidental series *could* be potentially infinite in multitude or finite in number. In any case, *hic non est procedere in infinitum:* a regress to infinity is irrelevant:—irrelevant in relation to a series of per se causes, because such a regress, though impossible, would not, even if possible, explain how the series starts; irrelevant in relation to a series of accidental causes because such a regress, though possible, would not, even if impossible, explain a factor in each member of the series if that factor needs explanation and is inexplicable by any member. In sum, the number of causes in a series is irrelevant to the problem of causality, but it is not irrelevant that the number is irrelevant. Upon the relevance of irrelevant members of a series turns the whole question of the causality of being.

Suggested Reading

The per se and accidental cause:

Aristotle, *Phys.*, II, 3; VII, 1; VIII, 4–5; *Metaph.*, II, 2; V, 2; VI, 2; *Post. Analy.*, I, 4.

St. Thomas Aquinas, *In Post. Analy.*, I, lect. 10; *In Metaph.*, V, lect. 3; *Comp. Theol.*, Ch. 3; *Contra Gentiles*, I, 13; II, 2; III, 13–14; III, 65;

Sum. Theol., I, 2, 3; I, 7, 4; I, 46, 2; I, 45, 5; I–II, 1, 4; *De Verit.*, II, 12; V, 2.

The instrumental cause:

Aristotle, *Phys.*, II, 3; VIII, 5; *Metaph.*, V, 2.
St. Thomas Aquinas, *In IV Sent.*, 1, 1, 4, *Sol.; Contra Gentiles*, I, 13; II, 21; *Sum. Theol.*, III, 62, 1; I, 45, 5; *De Verit.*, XXVI, 1; XXVII, 4 and 7; *De Pot.*, III, 11, ad 14.

VI · THE WAYS TO PROVE GOD'S EXISTENCE

The First Way

THE STATEMENT OF THE FIRST WAY

(1) There are things in motion.[1] (2) Things in motion are moved by another. (3) The "other" which moves things in motion cannot adequately explain motion unless it be itself unmoved; therefore (4) there must be an unmoved mover, whom all understand to be God.

OBSERVATION ON THE FIRST PROPOSITION

The motion in question is primarily local motion; and that is why St. Thomas calls the first way the more manifest way, because local motion is sensibly evident. Nevertheless St. Thomas does not mean to restrict the motion in question to local motion. Substantial, qualitative and quantitative changes also fall under the head of motion.[2] Notice, further, that a thing in motion is not necessarily moving something else; it is simply a subject of whatever qualification is accruing to it at that ontological interval *after* it has begun to change and *before* it has been changed; it is a being in the process, but not in the state, of achievement, a being which is being achieved. Thus is brought out precisely the datum to be explained: a being-being-achieved. The datum is not this: a being which is achieving something else. In short the datum to be explained is passive potency

[1] St. Thomas Aquinas, *Sum. Theol.*, I, 2, 3. Cf. *Contra Gentiles*, I, 13.

[2] St. Thomas Aquinas, *Sum. Theol.*, I, 2, 3, obj. 2, et ad 2; I, 105, 2–4, I–II, 9, 4.

which is in the process of being achieved, *e.g.*, modelable wax which is no longer quite unmodeled, nor as yet quite modeled, but is becoming modeled.

OBSERVATION ON THE SECOND PROPOSITION

Already established,[3] the second proposition calls for only one further remark. Living beings, which move themselves, are no exception to the principle: whatever is in motion is moved by another. Whether a movent move itself, or whether it move something else, it is not the fact that it is a *movent* which demands or excludes that it *be* moved. It is only when movents are not *identically* their motion that they demand "the other" as a cause of their motion. *Then* the movents must also *be* moved: the movents which move others must be moved to move others; the movents moving themselves must be moved to move themselves.[4]

The point needs more clarification. There are, St. Thomas explains, three kinds of operations: one, the operation of a thing which *moves* something else, *e.g.*, heating, cutting; two, the operation of a thing which *is* moved by something else, *e.g.*, being heated, being cut; three, operations which are the perfections of an actually existent operator, and do not tend to transmute something else. These last, for example, feeling, willing, understanding, do *not* move anything else nor *are* they moved by something else. These last are the immanent operations of living operants and, as immanent operations, they are without change.[5] However, immanent actions imply change if the living operants are not identified with their actions; but such operations imply change, not *because* they are immanent, but because they are not identified with the operants. Insofar, therefore, as immanent operations are not identified with the operants, in that far living beings, which move themselves, do not escape the causality

[3] Vd. pp. 77 and 104 sqq., where the proposition will be reestablished. Cf. Aristotle, *Phys.*, III, 1, 201b 5 sqq.

[4] St. Thomas Aquinas, *De Malo*, III, 2, ad 4.

[5] Cf. Aristotle, *De Anima*, I, 3, 407a 32; III, 7, 431a 4; *Nic. Ethics*, VII, 14, 1154b; *Metaph.*, IX, 6, 1048b 28; St. Thomas Aquinas, *Sum Theol.*, I, 14, 2, ad 2; I, 18, I; I–II, 31, 2; *Contra Gentiles*, I, 13; *In Phys.*, III, lect. 4; *In Phys.*, VIII, lect. 9.

of "the other." Living beings which are not identified with their operations must pass from potency to act, from inactivity to activity. Once vital potencies have been thus actuated, their *continuance* in vital activity is without change. Hence, immanent actions do not escape the causality of "the other" in all cases where such actions are not identified with the operants; "the other" must move these operants to their operations. Once in operation, immanent operants are not in motion; but at that ontological interval *after* they have left the state of passive potency and *before* they are in vital act, *all* actions, immanent or transitive, are in motion and are moved by "the other." [6]

In sum, no agent is in motion nor, therefore, is it moved *because* it is an agent; on the other hand all agents whose actions are not identically the agents themselves are in motion and are therefore moved, because *those* agents, at that precise ontological interval after they have left the state of passive potency and before they are in vital activity, are patients. Thus is brought out once more the datum which the first way attempts to explain: the actuation of passive potency. Living agents are no exception to the law, *quidquid movetur. . . .* They also must pass from potency to vital acts by the causality of "the other," and they must so pass, not because they are agents, but because they *then* are patients.

OBSERVATIONS ON THE THIRD PROPOSITION

¶ *First observation.* The third proposition has already been demonstrated in two steps.[7] In the first step, accepting the evidence that there *is* change, we see that a changing thing (a thing which is in motion, *i.e.*, in the process of being changed), since it does not yet fully possess the surplus determination which is accruing to it, is still in partial potency to that surplus determination. On the other hand, a changing thing is no longer purely in potency to the surplus determination which is accruing to it; it is becoming that surplus determination. For example, cold water becoming hot is not yet hot

---

[6] Cf. St. Thomas Aquinas, *Sum. Theol.*, I, 79, 2; *utrum intellectus sit potentia passiva.*

[7] See pp. 77 sqq.

—it is "getting there"; on the other hand, cold water becoming hot is no longer simply cold. Thus the same water when changing from cold to hot is both no-longer-cold and not-yet-hot; and the water has both these characteristics simultaneously. Yet water in change does not have both these predicates for the same reason. If it had, those characteristics would not only be simultaneously present in the water, but would also be identically the water; for water is the only factor common to both characteristics. Now this is impossible. Water as water possesses neither characteristic, else water as water would not become, it would have been both no-longer-cold and not-yet-hot. Since it is impossible that water both *be* the two characteristics simultaneously and *become* them both, water must possess both characteristics, not because it is identically both, but because of an actual characteristic (the hot) which by hypothesis the water as water does not possess. If the water as water does not possess the actual characteristic of hot, yet is possessing it withal, the water must be possessing it from some other source. In the given case some other hot thing is the reason why cold water is becoming hot. *Quidquid movetur ab alio movetur:* whatever changes owes its change to another.

It is fairly easy to see that the potential cannot be actual before change has begun, easy to see that cold water is not hot, because here there is no simultaneity of the presence of the potential and the actual—the no-longer-cold, the not-yet-hot. It is also easy to see that after change is over and done with, the surplus difference between a moving thing before and after its change must have been due to something else which was that surplus difference and which was the reason for that difference's new residence in the changed thing; that something else put that difference there. Here too, after change, there is no simultaneity of the presence of the hot and the cold in the water. It is a bit more difficult to see that after change has begun and before it is ended, the same point is involved: the becoming-actual is not identically the subject becoming actual; and therefore the becoming-actual must be due presently, here and now, to the other, the cause. This is more difficult to see, because here the presence of the actual and the potential in the same subject is simultaneous. Yet it is the same point which is involved. The only difference between the two cases is that in the first there *was* a cause of change; in the second there *is* here and now a cause which is steadily and uninterruptedly causing the change. Yet it is to this, the more difficult insight, to which we must come if we are to understand the matter in hand. The problem is to explain change during its process, not after it, because it is the "during" which is precisely the interval at which there is change. That explanation is a cause here and now causing that change. The explanation is not a cause which gave the subject of change a fillip and thereafter went about its own business. Change is due to a moving movent, not to a movent which once upon a time moved something else.[8]

¶ *Second observation.* The second step, the moving movent of the moved must either be itself moved by another movent or not. If the moving movent of the moved is itself moved by another movent, then that other movent is either itself moved by still another movent or it is not. Now this regress from movent *a* to movent *b* (which moves *a*) to movent *c* (which moves *b*) is quite irrelevant to the explanation of motion. True, such an explanation explains *a's* motion, and *b's* and *c's*, etc., but it does not explain the motion of that which *a* moves, and that was the point to be explained. The question was not this: what moved *a* to move the moved? The question was this: what moved the moved? When we say that *a* moved the moved, we have not explained anything if *a* itself was moved by *b*, and *b* was moved by *c*, etc.; we have explained only one motion by another, unexplained motion. We thus succeed in giving only a partial explanation. To say that one motion comes from another, which comes from still another, etc., this is to say that there is no other from which motion comes. Yet there is motion and it comes from another. Now, there is no other from which motion comes as long as the "other" gets its motion from still another. We must therefore drop the hypothesis that regress will get us anywhere; regress here is irrelevant because it explains nothing; it is also impossible, because without an unmoved movent movement cannot start at all, nor finish. The only conclusion left is that the

[8] Cf. St. Thomas Aquinas, *Contra Gentiles*, I, 13, *Tertio; Sum. Theol.*, I, 2, 3.

adequate explanation of motion lies in an unmoved movent from which motion here and now comes. St. Thomas expresses the matter shortly thus: there must be a first movent of a series of moved movents, else there could be no second movent, nor third, etc., nor consequently any series at all. But there cannot be a first movent unless it be unmoved.

It will be noticed that there is no appeal made here to the impossibility of an infinite series of accidental movents, which have moved in the past but now no longer move. Maybe there were such accidental movents, potentially infinite in number, and maybe not. What is impossible is that there be an infinite series of per se movents of present motion, which series is made up of moved movents alone. To explain present motion by a series of moved movents alone, is to explain the movement of a watch's hands by multiplying a watch's wheels and leaving out the spring.

OBSERVATIONS ON THE CONCLUSION

¶ *First observation.* The conclusion is that there exists an unmoved movent who is here and now moving the observedly moved thing. Even though there be intermediaries which transmit the first movent's motion (how many there are is irrelevant, but it is a safe conjecture that there are not many), nevertheless it is not the fact that there are intermediaries which lengthens the causal distance between a moved thing and its first movent. There is no causal distance between a moved thing and the first movent. Indeed, the first movent's motion is less distant, causally, from the moved thing than is its distance from its intermediary movent. Intermediary movents are the vehicles of the motion they received: passively that motion was received by them; passively it is passed along by them. But the causal impact of the first movent upon a man's sneeze is as immediate as it would be either with or without the tickle which preceded the sneeze. The first movent causes the tickle, if any, just as it causes the sneeze, viz., as an unmoved mover, and insofar as both tickle and sneeze are moved they are both one intermediary, one instrument of the motion of the first movent.

¶ *Second observation.* At this point of the demonstration we know that there exists an unmoved movent of things in motion. We have proved the existence of a first, proper cause of motion, a first movent. But this is not enough. If it were enough, we might equally well say that there is a first body, because God causes bodies; or a first sneeze, because God causes sneezes. Assuredly God causes one thing in the same way that He causes another thing. When, however, it is said that God is a first movent, the meaning is not that He is merely a movent, but that this word *movent* applies to Him in a "more excellent way." If it did not apply to Him in a more excellent way, then the name *movent* would include in its meaning the notion of creaturely motion, and we should have proved that something like a creaturely movent existed, only, it is unmoved.[9] This would leave God within the category of His effects, an existent surely, just as they are existents, but an existent categorically like them. This will not do. If God is categorically like His effects, He is simply more of the same thing as His effect. No one takes such a cause to be God. Nevertheless St. Thomas maintains that "this (the first movent) everyone understands to be God." [10]

¶ *Third observation.* Why does everyone understand the first movent to be God? Because a *first* movent is not so qualified by His motion of other things that He would not exist unless He were a movent of them. On the contrary, God would exist even if He had never been a first movent. God does not exist because He moves things; rather, motion exists because He is its first movent; and we know He exists because we know motion exists, which motion we know cannot exist without a first movent. But the reason why we know He exists, viz., because we know there must be a first movent of motion, is not the reason why He exists. He exists, not because He moves (this is the reason why we know He exists), *but because His motion is God Himself.*

What does this mean and how does it get God out of the categories? This means that, since it is by His motion that God causes motion in other things, God *is* the perfection to which He moves other things. Let us re-establish this, first, before extricating God from the categories. If God were not the perfection to which He moves other things, He would not be a first movent. Consider: a movent possesses that perfection to which it moves other things. A first movent possesses that perfection so as by being unmoved thereto; for, if a first movent were moved to the perfection which it communicates, it would not be first. Some other movent would be first—the movent, namely, which moved the supposed first movent to that perfection. Now assuming that a regress is irrelevant, we must come back to the original proposition: a first movent possesses the perfection to which it moves others in such wise that He *is* that perfection; He does not get it from another—He *is* it.

---

[9] Cf. St. Thomas Aquinas, *Sum. Theol.*, I, 13, 2, *Resp.;* I, 13, 6, *Resp.*

[10] St. Thomas Aquinas, *Sum. Theol.*, I, 2, 3, *Resp.*

We may now extricate God from the categories. Any surplus perfection, substantial or accidental, which is accruing to a subject of that perfection, has been demonstrated to be accruing to that subject in virtue of a second and a first movent. (A plurality of second movents is but one total moved movent.) Now, any such surplus perfection is not identically the subject of it: water becoming hot is not identically water, else water would never become but only be hot; the inorganic becoming organic is not identically the organic, else the inorganic would never become but only be organic. On the other hand the surplus perfection involves or contains the subject of it: there is no "becoming hot" without a subject which becomes hot; there is no "becoming organic" without a subject which becomes organic. To what extent do surplus perfections, which the subjects of them are becoming, involve those subjects? To this extent: the becoming-of-a-subject is for that subject to exist. To-be-becoming-hot is for the subject of that becoming to exist; to-be-becoming-organic is for the subject of that becoming to exist.[11] It is purely a spatial illusion to think that the surplus perfection of a moved thing is caused by a movent so as by being clapped by the movent, on to a subject which is existing somehow without that surplus. True, the subject could and does exist *before* a given motion begins without the surplus. But after motion begins and before it ends—this interval is, after all, the very spot where motion occurs—*then* the becoming-the-surplus is precisely the subject-becoming-the-surplus, *then* the changing subject is the subject-existing-as-changing.

---

[11] St. Thomas Aquinas, *Contra Gentiles,* II, 54, *Tertium.* The "becoming organic" is obviously not a change. It is a generation. Nevertheless, within the framework of generation, the factors of potency and act are still valid.

This point needs extraordinary insistence. Anyone can see that change involves something changing; that, since the surplus which change brings to a subject changing is not identically that subject, that surplus must be due to something which renders an account of the surplus because it *is* the surplus and is putting the surplus into the subject. But we must see more than that. We must see that the surplus so affects the subject of it that for that subject to-be-becoming-the-surplus is, for that subject, to-be-existing. Let us be repetitious here for the sake of bringing out distinctly the point involved. A subject of change can exist, before change, without changing; but a changing subject cannot exist without changing, nor can it change without existing. Water-becoming-hot is, for the water so becoming, water-existing-as-becoming. Any way of being, whether it be a process of becoming (substantial or accidental) or an achievement (substantial or accidental), *e.g.*, water becoming hot, the inorganic becoming organic; water being hot, or the organic being organic; any way of being is nothing more or less than a being-existing-in-that-way. To-be-becoming-white is, for the being-becoming-white, to be, to-be-white is, for the being-which-is-white, to be. To exist in a category of being is, for the being in that category, to exist.

Now, since the unity of the subject and its accruing qualifications forces us to assert that it is the whole, the subject plus its accruing qualifications, which exists, it follows that it is the whole which is being caused to exist. Water-being-caused-to-be-hot is being caused to exist, precisely because water-being-caused-to-be-hot is, for that water, to exist-as-becoming-hot. The only question left is this: what is causing the composite to exist inasmuch as it is causing the composite to be a composite?

Certainly that cause cannot be the subject of the composite before its change. It cannot be the antecedent subject, because the antecedent subject is potential: the antecedent subject can form part of the composite, but merely as antecedent subject it does not form part of the composite. Nor can a second movent alone be the cause of the composite, because the second movent demands a first movent. Well then, perhaps the first and second movent are the cause of the existence of the composite inasmuch as both cause the composite. This answer would satisfy if a second movent in addition to demanding a first movent did not also presuppose an existent subject to be changed. A second movent has something "to go on," something to start with, something already existent. The heat which heats water presupposes water; the heat which heats water presupposes another heat which heated the heat which heats water. Second movents presuppose the existence of a subject which they are to change. They also presuppose the existence of the movents which moved them. Now, precisely, it is the existence of a subject which cannot be presupposed by the causality of either a second or first movent which is in question here. Consider an actual subject of actual change—*that* subject was not in existence before change, *that* subject was only potentially existent, that is to say, it was inexistent as an actual subject of actual change. The point is badly missed here in the contention that a subject of change existed before its change and therefore needs no cause of its existence. The subject of actual change existed potentially before its change, and therefore it needed no cause of its being a subject of actual change *then*, because *then* it was not an actual subject of the actual change here and now. Before change, the subject of change is only potentially the subject of what it will become; actually it is the subject of what it has become or is becoming. And if one insists that at least the subject of change is, before its change, actually the subject of what it had become or was becoming *then*, that is true, but it is irrelevant to the present question. Irrelevant, because it raises exactly the *same* question: what causes the actual subject of becoming to exist, since it is existing only as becoming and its becoming is caused?

The only answer is this: a cause which does not presuppose the existence of a-subject-of-becoming, but causes that existence. The point is not merely that the first movent does this. That we already knew in knowing that there was a first movent. The point is rather this: this is what the first movent does. That we know by the double analysis of the effect whose cause we sought, and of the cause which alone explains the effect.[12] The effect is a moved thing, existing-as-moved. The cause is a cause which cannot presuppose a subject-existing-as-moved (there is no such subject before its movement), but causes the subject to-be-existing-as-moved.

We have now extricated God from the categories. The First Cause of the subject-existing-as-moved not only cannot be its effect, since no cause can be its effect, but the First Cause cannot even be like Its effect. The reasons why may now be given distinctly: (1) Since God is the First Cause of anything-existing-as-moved, it suffices for Him to be a subject of existence in order to be an existent. If it did not suffice for God to be God in order that He be an existent, He, a subject of existence, would have to derive His own act of existing from a cause of that act—quite as things-existing-as-moved derive their existence from Him. But this is impossible because God is the First Cause of things-existing-as-moved. Thus, God (the *One Who* exists) is identically His own act of existing. For Him, to exist and to be God are the same. (2) If such a being, viz., one for whom to exist is quite the same as to be himself, were in a category of being, that category would have to be the category *being*, because a category is predicated essentially and necessarily of anything in the category, and God is by essence being, an act of existing. Now, no act of existing can be a category, because a category has differences outside of itself, whereas there is nothing different from the act of existing except nonexistence, and that is not a difference at all.[13] We may express the same thing thus: different sorts of being do not differ by one sort being and the other sort not being; different sorts of being differ by one sort being this sort, the other sort being another sort. In other words, if beings differ they must differ, not by reason of their act of existing (that is common to all existents), but by reason of different subjects of that act. The accretion of the act of being to different subjects of that act makes

[12] St. Thomas Aquinas, *De Ente et Essentia,* Ch. IV; ed. Roland-Gosselin, p. 35: *Omne autem quod convenit alicui. . . .*

[13] Cf. for (1) and (2), St. Thomas Aquinas, *Sum. Theol.,* I, 3, 4, and 5. Cf. also *Contra Gentiles,* I, 22: *unumquodque est per suum esse.*

those subjects to be different in making them to be. Now in God there is no accretion of the act of His being to Him: He *is* that act, He does not get it. Not being a subject of being which is different from the act of being, but rather being a subject of being which is identically the act of being, God is not in any category. At long last we have the conclusion that the existence of the God Whose existence is proved is an existence unqualified: *non aliquomodo est, sed quod est, est.*[14]

A Summary of Objections

All the philosophically possible, and historically actual, misunderstandings of the proof have been discussed in principle. For instance, one might think that living beings, which move themselves, were exempt from the principle, *quidquid movetur*. . . . This is not so. Living beings which are not identically their vital operations, must pass by the motion of "the other" from the power to act vitally to the actuation of that power. At the ontological interval between the power to act vitally and the power acting vitally, living beings are in motion and are moved. Once they are acting vitally, they are no longer subject to the causality of "the other" as to a *mover*, because then they are no longer in movement, no longer in the process of change.

Another misunderstanding is that the argument, it might be said, proves only the existence of a first mover of local movement; it does not prove a first mover of all change. This is not so. The unmoved mover of local movement is either immobile in respect to all kinds of movement, or not. If not, the same argument recurs in relation to each and every movement in which an immobile mover of local movement *is* mobile. And since in every movement other than local there must also be a first mover, which, if moved, could not be first, there must be an unmoved mover of every movement, substantial and qualitative.

Still another misunderstanding is that the last conclusion, viz., there must be an immobile mover of every sort of movement, does not eliminate the possibility of many first movents. The point may be urged thus: There might be circular causality inasmuch as one first movent of local movement might be moved by another first movent of qualitative movement, and this second first movent might be moved by a third first movent which causes being, and this third movent might be moved locally by the "first" first movent to cause being, and thus the circle is closed. This might be the state of affairs where the axiom *causae ad invicem sunt causae* is applicable. But that axiom will not do here. The thing is impossible because (1) the unmoved movent must be (not be caused to be) that which its movement is to communicate; (2) that which the first movent communicates is the act of existing; and (3) the act of existing can have only *one* first cause. If the act of existing had more than one cause, one cause would have to presuppose the act of existing (its own) which was supposed to be caused. Hence the first movent of a thing-existing-in-motion is absolutely one.

---

[14] St. Augustine, *Confessions*, XIII, 31 (PL 32, col. 865).

Suggested Reading

The five ways:

St. Thomas Aquinas, *Contra Gentiles,* I, 12–13; III, 29; *Sum. Theol.*, I, 2, 2–3; *De Pot.*, VII, 3.

Arnou, R., S.J., *De quinque viis sancti Thomae ad demonstrandam Dei existentiam apud antiquos Graecos et Judaeos praeformatis vel adumbratis.*

Duhem, P., *Le système du monde,* Vol. V.

Geny, P., S.J., "A propos des preuves thomistes de l'existence de Dieu," *Revue de philosophie,* XXXI, pp. 575–601.

Gilson, E., *The Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas,* Ch. IV; *Le Thomisme,* Ch. III.

Mascall, E. L., *He Who Is,* Chs. V–VI.

Motte, A. R., O.P., "A propos des 'cinq voies,'" *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques,* XXVII, pp. 577–582.

Paulus, J., "Le caractère métaphysique des preuves thomistes de l'existence de Dieu," *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du moyen âge,* IX, pp. 143–153.

Sertillanges, A. D., O.P., "Sur la démonstrabilité de Dieu. Comment on prouve Dieu," *Revue Apologétique* XLVI, pp. 385–395; 515–521.

Motion: the first way:

Aristotle, *Phys.*, II, 7; III, 1; VI, 6; VII, 1; VIII, 4–9; *Metaph.*, IX, 6; XI, 7; XII, 5–7; *De Gener. et Corrup.*, I, 10; *De Anima*, I, 3.

St. Thomas Aquinas, *De Ente et Essentia*, Chs. IV–V; *In Phys.*, VII, lect. 1–2; VIII, lect. 9, 12, 13, 23; *In Metaph.*, XII, lect. 3; *Contra Gentiles*, I, 13; I, 22; II, 6; II, 54; *Sum. Theol.*, I, 2, 3; I, 105, 2–4; I–II, 9, 4; *De Malo*, III, 2; *Comp. Theol.*, Ch. 31.

Bremond, A., S.J., "L'argument du Premier Moteur dans le 'contra gentes,'" *La dilemme Aristotélicien, Archives de Philosophie*, X, 2, pp. 142–154.

VII · THE WAYS TO PROVE GOD'S EXISTENCE

The Second and Third Ways

THE STATEMENT OF THE SECOND WAY[1]

(1) We find in sensible things an order of efficient causes. (2) An order of efficient causes demands an uncaused efficient cause. (3) Therefore there exists an uncaused efficient cause whom all name God.

OBSERVATIONS ON THE FIRST PROPOSITION

¶ *First observation.* Although the datum of the second way is in fact a plurality of efficient causes, nevertheless the proof would prove just as well were the datum only one efficient cause. Just as moved movents in the first way are one total moved movent in relation to the first or unmoved movent, so the caused causes of the second way are one total caused cause in relation to the uncaused cause. Thus the argument proceeds from the nature of efficient causality: *ex ratione causae efficientis.*

¶ *Second observation.* The datum is a plurality of per se causes. A per se cause, as we have seen, is actually operative because it possesses both determinants of its operation, the essential determinant accounting for the *kind* the effect will be, the existential determinant accounting for the *production* of an effect of a certain kind. A plurality of such causes accordingly is several such causes all acting in concert (because they are existentially determined to act) according to some intelligible plan whereby the effect is such and not other (because the causes and their activity are essentially such and not other). For example, a man, a hammer, a nail are a plurality of per se causes of the fixing of a plank.

---

[1] St. Thomas Aquinas, *Sum. Theol.*, I, 2, 3; *Contra Gentiles*, I, 13.

¶ *Third observation.* Clearly the members of such a series must differ in nature; no one is like any other in nature. If the members did not differ in nature one from the other, the sameness of their nature would destroy the necessity of a plurality. If two members of a per se series were alike, one of them could do what the other does, and so there would be no need for one of them. For example, light one candle; with the lit candle light another; the first candle, which is like the second, was unnecessary to the lighting of the second. No need of a series there. Causes, however, which are all operating together are so related to their effect that if you pull one of them away from the complex, the rest effect nothing. For example, sun, soil, vine, water are so related to grapes.

On the other hand, although each member of a per se series is unlike another member, nevertheless the total series is both like its effect (essential determinant) and bent on producing the effect (existential determinant). Only, the whole series gets its essential determinant in part from the principal cause, and its existential determinant wholly from the principal cause. In the *man* lies, in part, the essential determinant of the activity of the hammer and the nail. He elevates the proper virtue of these instruments to the proper virtue of his own causality. The particularity of the job which instruments perform is due to its particularization by the principal cause. Moreover, the man also stiffens into their operational existence the activity of the instruments. This means of course that efficient causality finds part of its explanation in final causality. No matter. Even though efficient causality is not the same as final causality, it is still efficient causality which is being explained when final causality is appealed to in order to explain why efficient causes begin to operate rather than remain inert. The second way is still *ex ratione causae efficientis.*

The intention of the agent is a cause so far forth as it moves the efficient cause to act; and thus, inasmuch as it has the characteristic of a movent, it pertains in a way to acting; and thus, inasmuch as it has the characteristic of a movent, it belongs in a way to the genus of efficient cause.[2]

¶ *Fourth observation.* The members of a per se series need not be related as instrumental to principal cause, as, *e.g.*, the hammer, the nail are related to the man. They could all be principal causes, *e.g.*, vine, sun, soil, water are principal causes of grapes. It is the determinate, concerted action of causes upon an effect which is essential to the "perseity" of a series, not the instrumentality of the members. This leads to another and most important observation on the first proposition.

¶ *Fifth observation.* It is the activity, the operation, of causes which is the datum of the second way: causes causing. The datum of the first way was beings-being-moved; the datum of the second way is beings-moving-something-else. A vast difference is here. Beings-being-moved are patients. Beings-moving-something-else are agents. Agents are acting. Patients are acted upon. Patients are becoming something; they are in *fieri*. Agents are causing something else to become something; they are in *agere*.

It is of course true that a being can be both an agent or movent and a patient or moved. Nevertheless an agent is not moved *because* it is an agent, nor is a patient a movent *because* it is moved. An agent is not, as an agent, becoming anything at all; it is simply in the act of causing, the act of moving something else. In the agent the act of causing does not change *it;* the agent's act of causing changes something else. True, before its activity an agent becomes active, and *then* there is a becoming in it, viz., the agent-becoming-active; but there is no change in the act of causing upon which an agent has entered; the change lies in that which the act of causing *causes* to change. On the other hand, a patient is not, as moved, causing anything else to change; it is being moved by something else. Should a patient happen also to move something else, this would be because it is the instrument of another movent whose motion it is transmitting, *e.g.*, the hammer is transmitting the motion of the arm which is transmitting the motion of the man. Thus these instrumental movents do not move something else because they *are* moved by something else (they could be moved *by* something else without themselves moving anything at all), but because a cause is moving them to move something else by a motion which is principally attributable to that cause and not to them except as to instruments.

---

[2] St. Thomas Aquinas, *In Lib. de Causis*, lect. 1, *ad fin.*

The matter may now be fixed. Agents as agents are not moved except insofar as they are moved from inactivity to their operations, but *then* they are not agents; *then* they are patients. Patients as patients do not move anything else except insofar as they transmit the motion of a principal cause, but *then* they are not patients; *then* they are instrumental agents. Agents are unmoved in their act of causing, because their act of causing is not a change in *them;* it is a change in something else. Patients are moved in their act of becoming, but in that act of becoming *they* do not move anything else. It is only after (a causal, not a temporal interval) they have become something that patients move something else, and *then* they are no longer patients but the instruments of a principal agent. Now the datum of the second way is agents, principal or instrumental, in their act of causing.

¶ *Sixth observation.* The act of causing of instrumental agents is caused mainly by a principal agent; the act of causing of a principal agent is caused by the first cause. This is only a nominal description of the relation between instrumental and principal cause, and between principal cause and first cause. That such *is* the relation will be proved under the second proposition.

Principal agents cause by their own permanently possessed power an effect like themselves, *e.g.*, a man generates a man. Instrumental agents cause effects which are not wholly proportionate to their own power, but rather proportionate to their own power *and* to the power of the principal agent. Principal agents endow instrumental agents with an act of causing which is not wholly the act of the instrument; it is the act of the principal agent acting through the instrument. Principal agents themselves are endowed with an act of causing by the first cause which act of causing *is* their own. This will mean of course that second principal causes are analogically instruments of the first cause; they are not the instruments of the first cause in the same way that *their* instruments are instrumental. The instruments of a principal cause are instrumental precisely because the act of causing of those instruments is not wholly their own; it is the act of causing of the principal agent acting through the instrument. The instrumentality of principal agents in relation to the first cause is only an analogous instrumentality, precisely because the first cause causes the act of causing in principal agents to be *their own act of causing.*

OBSERVATIONS ON THE SECOND PROPOSITION

¶ *First observation.* The second proposition states conjunctively two propositions which the first way stated separately. The two propositions are: (1) the given causes demand a cause of their causing; (2) the cause of the given causes' causing must ultimately be an uncaused cause. Stated conjunctively those two propositions are: an order of efficient causes demands an uncaused efficient cause.

¶ *Second observation.* The demonstration of the second proposition is made in two steps. First step: none of the given causes is identically its causal operation, because none of them is always causing. There must therefore be some reason why the given causes are causing, some reason which cannot lie in them. If the reason for the given causes' causing lay in them, they would always be in their acts of causing, and they are not: neither the painter nor his brush is always painting. If he paints, there must be some surplus reason over and above both the power of the painter and of his brush which explains why he does actually paint. That reason is the cause of his painting.

Second step: that "other" cause of the causing of the given agents either has its own causing caused or it does not. If it does not, it is an uncaused cause of causing. If it does have its own causing caused by another cause, we have not yet given an adequate or relevant explanation. The reason is this: to explain causing by more causing, and to explain more causing by still more causing, etc., is to appeal to an infinite series of caused causes of causing. Now this is irrelevant even if it were possible. Irrelevant because there can be no series whatsoever where there is no first cause, and there can be no first cause where there is no uncaused cause of it. Moreover the infinite series is impossible, because the members of a per se series are, being actually operative, actually existent, and the actually existent cannot be infinite in number.

St. Thomas makes the second step above as he did in the first way. The first step above he makes as follows: nothing can cause itself. The reason is that in order to cause itself, a being would have to exist—since it is to be a cause, *before* it exists—if it is to be an effect; that is, in order to cause itself a being would have to be and not-be. That is a contradiction in terms. Now, *any* being which would be supposed to cause its own causing would have to cause itself. Causing is nothing but a cause in the act of causing. To suppose that a cause causes its own causing is to suppose that *before* its causing it is in the very act of causing the very thing which it was supposed to cause, viz., its own causing. Thus, a cause causing its own causing both is causing, by hypothesis, and is not causing. This is a contradiction in terms. It is easily avoided by adverting to the fact that no causing causes itself: causing causes effects.

The same point may be made in another way. Between cause *A* and cause *A* causing an effect there is sometimes an instrument, say the brush of the painter, and sometimes not, as in a man generating a man. In the first case the causality of the instrument is due to the principal cause: *A* is the cause of the instrument's causing. In the second case, since *A* is not identically its own causing, since nevertheless it is *A* which is causing because it is a principal agent, there must be a cause of *A's* causing. The only question is: what relation does *A* causing bear to the cause of its causing? You may take this relation from either end: from *A* causing, or from the cause of *A's* causing. Taken from *A* causing, the related factor is: *A* constituted in its *own act of causing* by the first cause. Taken from the cause of *A's* causing, the function of that cause is precisely to effect such a juncture between *A* and its causing that *A*, now constituted in its own act of causing, is the *immediate* cause, not of its own causing, but of the effect of its own causing.

Let us expand this point. The first cause of *A's* causing is not a medium either between *A* and its causing or between *A* and the effect of *A's* causing. For, once you posit such a medium, there is no reason why you should not posit an infinity of such media. That is impossible. On the other hand, the absence of a medium between *A* and its causing, and between *A's* causing and its effect, does not dispense with the necessity of there being a cause of *A's* causing when *A* is not identically its own causing. Only, that cause of *A's* causing cannot usurp the place of *A*, otherwise it would not be *A* which is causing; nor can it appropriate *A's* causing to itself, otherwise *A's* causing would not belong to *A* but to that other cause; nor can it be an intermediary cause of the effect of *A's* causing, otherwise *A* would not be a principal cause. The cause of *A's* causing simply causes *A* to cause—that and no more. It is not *A*, nor *A's* causing, nor an intermediary cause either between *A* and its causing or between *A* and the effect of *A's* causing.

The difficulty of the insight involved here might warrant another expression of the matter. Clearly, principal causes cause by their own causing. They do not cause their own causing, because they are not in the act of causing simply on the strength of being agents which *can* cause. Clearly, too, principal causes by their own causing cause effects which are properly attributable to themselves; they do not cause effects which are not properly attributable to themselves. Instrumental causes do that. Not that there could not be intermediary effects. There could be. The point is, there is no intermediary effect between a principal cause and the effect, which is wholly its own. This being so, if we now suppose as proven the necessity of a cause of secondary principal causing, it follows that such a cause must have as *its* effect (1) such a juncture of the act of causing to some principal agent as will allow (2) the agent, now constituted in its act of causing, to be the immediate cause, not of its causing but of the effect of its causing.

OBSERVATIONS ON THE THIRD PROPOSITION

¶ *First observation.* The conclusion is that there exists here and now an uncaused cause of observed causing, principal or instrumental. As in the first way, so here, the number of intermediary caused causes, principal or instrumental, is irrelevant. All caused causes are one total caused cause in relation to the uncaused cause, and they are all equally immediate to the uncaused cause. And as in the first way it was the existence of a proper cause of motion which was demonstrated, so here, it is the existence of a proper cause of causing which is demonstrated: from motion to a first movent, from causes causing to an uncaused cause of their causing.

¶ *Second observation.* Just as in the first way God needed to be extricated from the category of movents, so here, He must be extricated from the category of causes. To say only that there exists an uncaused cause is to state the truth, but not the whole truth. The whole truth is this: the uncaused cause is not so qualified by his characteristic of causing that He would not exist unless He were causing. God would exist even though He did not cause. His causing is the reason we know He exists, not the reason why He exists. He exists because "causing" applies to Him in a "more excellent way," *i.e.*, because His causing is uncaused, God Himself.

¶ *Third observation.* The manner of extricating God from the categories is the same as in the first way. (1) God, let it be recalled, *is* His causing, else His causing would be caused, and so He would not be the first cause of causing. (2) Since, in caused causes, the surplus of their act of causing over them precludes the identification of that surplus with them, and since nevertheless that surplus contains the subjects of it, it must be that a cause-causing is a cause-existing-as-causing. A painter-painting is a painter-existing-as-painting. (3) Now the cause is caused to be causing: the painter is caused to be painting. Whence, the painter is caused to be-existing-as-painting. (4) The only question left is this: what causes the subject to be existing-as-causing? Certainly not any cause which presupposes the existence of that subject, precisely because the existence of that actual subject of actual causing cannot be presupposed by any cause. The actual subject of actual causing exists *only* as actually causing; it does not exist before it is actually causing. To say that the actual subject of the act of causing existed before its actual causing is not true. Before its actual causing the subject did not actually exist at all, but only potentially, *i.e.*, it was inexistent. True, the potential subject of actual causing may have existed as the actual subject of some *previous* act of causing, but that is irrelevant precisely because it raises the same question: What caused *that* actual subject of *previously* actual causing to exist, since it existed only as causing and its causing was caused? The answer is: A cause which did not presuppose, but caused, the existence of a subject of the act of causing.

At this point God is seen to be outside the categories. Not only is the First Cause not its effects; it is not even like them. The reason is the same as in the first way: (1) Since God is the first cause of anything-existing-as-causing, it suffices for Him to be a subject of existence in order to be an existent. If it did not suffice, He, the first cause of anything-existing-as-causing, would have to derive His own act of existing-as-causing from a cause of that act—quite as things-existing-as-causing derive their existence from Him. But this is impossible, because God is the first cause of things-existing-as-causing. Thus God is identically His own act of existing. (2) If one for whom to be Himself is quite the same as to exist were in a category of being, that category would have to be being. Yet being is not a category. Categories are different kinds of being whose differences cannot be drawn from the act of existing, because the act of existing is not, as such, different as between one category and another. Nor can non-being be a difference at all. Whence, the act of existing, which is undifferentiated by anything in *it*, must, if an act of existing *alone* be involved (the proven case of God alone), be totally different from all other beings in which there is involved something outside *their* act of existing which makes them different. In sum, God's causing is God, because it is *first* causing. Since God's causing is God and since to be causing is, for God, to exist, it suffices to be God in order for Him to exist. Thus He differs from anything whose existing is not its own but an accretion to it. His act of existing is identically Himself.

THE STATEMENT OF THE THIRD WAY[3]

(1) We find among things that some of them are able to be and not to be, because they are generated and corrupted. (2) Not all things can be such; there must be something whose existence is necessary. (3) A necessary existent either is or supposes a being whose necessity is from itself. (4) Therefore there is a necessary being whose necessity is from itself and whom all name God.

OBSERVATIONS ON THE FIRST PROPOSITION

¶ *First observation.* The data are these: things which exist but, because they begin and cease to be, are able both to exist and not to exist, for example, the living children of some parents. The data are not these: things which do not, but can, exist, *e.g.*, the future children of some parents. The meaning of these data may be further drawn out. Things which are able both to be and not to be are contingent things. Contingent things are opposed to necessary things, which cannot not be. It is of course true that the possible or contingent being does not exist of itself, and hence if it exists must have its existence from a cause. But the datum of the third way is not the possible being which does *not* exist of itself; it is the actual being which *does* exist but *not* of itself. And the reason why we know that such a being does exist but not of itself is because we see it come into existence from some other existent, and we also see it go out of its own existence into some other form of existence. Thus the datum is not the generable and the corruptible; it is the generated and corrupted, which are, consequently, able to be (generable) and also able not to be (corruptible).

¶ *Second observation.* That which exists, but not of itself, is a contingent *being*. It is of *that* datum that we must seek a cause. In the first way we concluded from something-existing-as-becoming to a first cause of its-existing-as-becoming. In the second way we came from something-existing-as-causing to a first cause of its-existing-as-causing. In the data of both ways there was an accretion of a contingent factor of being (becoming and causing) to a subject of that accretion. In both ways the added factor so affected the subject that the subject was existing-as-qualified-by-that-factor. That is why, in seeking an adequate cause of data we had to appeal to a first cause of the subject-existing-as-qualified-by-that-factor. Here in the third way there is in the data an accretion and loss, not of factors of being, but of being itself. Here things are generated and perish; here they come, not to the act of changing or causing, but to the act of being. Thus the data of the third way are contingent beings.

---

[3] St. Thomas Aquinas, *Sum. Theol.*, I, 2, 3.

To think that the act of existing which accrues to a subject of that act of existing accrues to that subject as *already* existing, is to commit the same fallacy as to think that an act of becoming or of causing accrues to some subject which is *already* (*before* the accretion) becoming or causing. The present act of existing accrues to some subject which did *not* have the present act before it existed; it accrues to some subject which *was* not but *could* be the present subject of present existence. Of the antecedent subject of the present act of existing, all we can say is this: Either it existed beforehand or it did not. If it existed beforehand *and* came into existence, it raises exactly the same question as present contingent being raises, viz., whence did its act of existing come? If the antecedent subject of present existence existed beforehand and did not come into existence, it was a necessary being. This leads to the next proposition.

OBSERVATION ON THE SECOND PROPOSITION

The reason why not all beings can have come into existence, why *some* being is necessary, is as follows. If an antecedent subject of a present act of existing did not exist by *any* previous act of existing, obviously it would not have existed at all; and if *no* antecedent subjects of present acts of existing existed at all, before their present existence there was a time when *nothing* existed. But if once there was nothing, there would be nothing now, because from nothing there comes nothing. Clearly, then, since there are presently existent things, *some* antecedent subject of a present act of existing *must have* existed before this present. To say that is to say that some being is necessary.

The same point may be made thus. A possible or contingent being can be and can not be. If therefore all things are only possible, nothing would ever emerge from possibility into existence. Yet we see that some things which can be and not be do exist. Whence, not all things can be only possible or contingent; there must be some necessary being. The only question left is: wherein lies the necessity of a necessary being?

OBSERVATION ON THE THIRD PROPOSITION

The necessity of a necessary being lies either in its own act of existing or outside it, that is, the reason why a necessary being *must be* is either because its act of existing must be caused or uncaused. If the act of existing of a necessary being must be caused, we must come to a cause of it whose own act of existing is not caused. Regress here is no more relevant or possible than in moved movents of change or caused causes of causing.

OBSERVATION ON THE FOURTH PROPOSITION

There is no conceptual difference at all between an uncaused act of existing and being itself. In the first two ways there was some conceptual difference between an unmoved movent and being itself, and between an uncaused cause and being itself. From an unmoved movent we came to being itself thus: an unmoved movent is a cause of anything-existing-as-moved, therefore an unmoved movent is a cause of being, because for the thing-which-is-moved, to-be and to-be-moved are the same. From an uncaused cause of causing we came to being itself thus: An uncaused cause of causing is the cause of anything-existing-as-causing; therefore an uncaused cause is a cause of being, because for a thing-which-is-causing, to-be and to-be-causing are the same. Now in both cases a cause of being is being itself, one for whom essence and the act of existing are identical. Here in the third way the term of our proof is an uncaused act of being. This uncaused act of being is synonymous with being itself. God is thus out of the category at that point at which it is seen that He is the necessary being who confers their necessity upon other necessary beings.

Suggested Reading

Efficient causality: The second way:

ARISTOTLE, *Metaph.*, II, 2.

ST. AUGUSTINE, *Enarr, in Ps.*, LXXIII (PL 36, coll. 941–946); CX (PL 37, coll. 1463–1466); CXIV (PL 37, coll. 1486–1490).

ST. THOMAS AQUINAS, *In Lib. de Causis*, lect. 1; *In Metaph.*, II, lect. 2; *Contra Gentiles*, I, 13; II, 21; *Sum. Theol.*, I, 2, 3; I, 46, 2.

Necessity and Possibility: The third way:

ARISTOTLE, *Metaph.*, IX, 8; XII, 6.

AVICENNA, *Avicennae Metaphysices Compendium*, pp. 91–111.

ST. THOMAS AQUINAS, *Contra Gentiles*, I, 15; II, 15; *Sum. Theol.*, I, 2, 3; I, 19, 8.

CHAMBAT, L., O.S.B., "La 'tertia via' dans saint Thomas et Aristote," *Revue Thomiste*, X, pp. 334–338.

SERTILLANGES, A. D., O.P., "A propos des preuves de Dieu. La troisième voie thomiste," *Revue de Philosophie*, XXXII, pp. 319–330.

VIII · THE WAYS TO PROVE GOD'S EXISTENCE

The Fourth Way

THE STATEMENT OF THE FOURTH WAY[1]

(1) We find in things the more or less good, noble, true, and so on. (2) The more or less approximate the highest and are caused by the highest in each order. (3) Therefore there exists a cause of being, of goodness, and of any other perfection, which we call God.

OBSERVATIONS ON THE FIRST PROPOSITION

¶ *First observation.* The data of the fourth way are existents in which we find transcendental perfections. Not all perfections are transcendental. There are no two ways of being, say, a man or an animal. Either one is a man or one is not. These specific and generic perfections are not the data of the fourth way. Nor are those generic perfections which are shared unequally by the various subjects of them the data of the fourth way, *e.g.*, animal or body, said of man and beast. Still less are those perfections the data of the fourth way which are accidental to the individuals of the same species, *e.g.*, human knowledge, said of human beings. All the above perfections are univocal: they have the same meaning every time they are predicated, and the subjects of which they are predicated are only some beings. A transcendental perfection is (1) predicable of everything which is or can be, (2) according to the proportion or measure by which each subject of predication possesses the transcendental perfection. Thus, *being* (that which is or can be) is predicable of everything, according to the measure by which each and every thing is a being. For example, *man is a being*, *this paper is a being*, etc., according as it is *man*, *paper*, etc., which are being. The main transcendental perfections are being, the one, the true, the good. We shall limit the discussion to the first transcendental.

---

[1] St. Thomas Aquinas, *Sum. Theol.*, I, 2, 3.

¶ *Second observation.* There are grades or degrees of each transcendental perfection. To take only the first one, there are grades of being. There are grades because the nature of some beings is a cut above or a cut below the nature of other beings. Being a *man* is a cut above being a *stone*, and a cut below being an *angel*. Sometimes of course it is impossible to say in which nature the higher grade of being lies, for example, in limestone or in granite; but sometimes it is not. These are grades of being, because a nature is denominated a being according as that nature exists or can exist.[2]

OBSERVATIONS ON THE SECOND PROPOSITION

¶ *First observation.* The grades of transcendental perfections demand that no being in which those grades are found be the full possessor of them, precisely because those perfections are gradated. Man, being a cut above a stone and a cut below an angel, has more being than a stone and less than an angel. Thus, man is not as fully a being as an angel, nor is a stone as fully a being as a man. The point can also be made thus: If to-be-a-man were to be fully a being, there would be no being except man. Now, to say that no given being is fully the transcendental perfection which is found in it, is to say that the transcendental perfection found in a given being approximates, but does not exhaust, that perfection.

¶ *Second observation.* Granted that a given transcendental perfection approximates but does not exhaust its highest grade, it follows that it must be caused. If it were not caused, the transcendental perfection would have to be identical with its given possessor. That, however, is impossible. If being (the transcendental perfection) were identically to-be-a-man (the possessor), there would be no other being except man. Or one may put it thus: If to-be-a-man were identically to-be, man would be all the being there is. Assuming now that a transcendental perfection is possessed, *e.g.*, assuming that there *is* a man; assuming furthermore that, although possessed, a transcendental perfection is not so fully possessed as to be identically its possessor, the only conclusion left is that a transcendental perfection is caused to be. It remains only to determine what sort of cause of causing is involved. This leads us to the third proposition.

---

[2] The true and the good also have their grades: things are more or less good and true, because it is the nature of anything's being as related to the intellect that is the true, and as related to appetite, the nature of anything's being is good. Now, being is gradated, and so therefore are the good and the true.

OBSERVATIONS ON THE THIRD PROPOSITION

¶ *First observation.* The sort of causing involved here is primarily exemplary causing. An exemplary cause [3] is one which accounts for an effect being of this sort rather than that, a cause which specifies an effect. Such a cause may so function either because it is of the same nature as its effect, as a generator is like the generated, or because its knowledge is the pattern of its effect, as a house-builder's preconceived plan is like his house. Now, in the first part of proposition (2), which was to the effect that the more or less approximates the highest, it is clear that the highest being is the standard or measure according to which the standardized has more or less being. Thus the highest being is the exemplary cause of the more or less being, the pattern according to which the cloth is cut. True, the highest being is not like its effects in their natures: God is not in His nature like man. Nor is God's knowledge of the exemplified like the exemplified. Nevertheless, insofar as any existent is a sample of being, *it* is like both God's nature and God's knowledge. The relation of the instances to what they instance is here a one-way relation: it is only from the instance to the exemplar; it is not also from the exemplar to the exemplified. Such a one-way relation is demanded by the data: gradated, transcendental perfections. Because the perfection is *gradated*, there must be a standard according to which the perfection is more or less approximative of the standard; because the gradation is a *transcendental* perfection, the highest grade of it must be without limitation, and therefore unlike the exemplified in that very spot in which the exemplified is like the exemplar. A sample is not the whole cloth, it is like the whole cloth. And the whole cloth of being, namely unlimited being, cannot be like the sample of it, precisely because *that* whole cloth is not a sample of being; it *is* being, the exemplar of being.

---

[3] Vd. pp. 90 sqq.

¶ *Second observation.* Obviously there must be an exemplar if there is the exemplified. There must be a house plan if there is a house. True, the necessity of a house plan is a contingent necessity: there need have been no such plan unless there were the house, nor, after the house is built, need there be a house plan any more, exercising its act of exemplarising. The reason for all this is simply that the house plan, being like its effect, is just as contingent in nature and being as that effect. The only necessity of there actually being an existent house plan is at the time when the house is being built according to plan. The matter is different when there is question of the exemplar of being. Here the necessity of there being an actually existent and absolutely perfect exemplar of being follows simply from the fact that it is being, gradated being, of which we observe the samples. To repeat the reasons for the necessity of an existent, perfect exemplar: (1) As found in things, being is not fully possessed by anything. If it were, there would be no other being but the one in which being is found, whereas there are many more beings than any one of them; (2) The perfect exemplar of these examples of more or less being must exist if they exist. Now they do exist.

The appearance of Platonism which this argument wears comes precisely from our difficulty, and that of Platonism, in seeing that being is a transcendental. Let us see this point clearly. A transcendental perfection bears a necessary, conceptual relation to *all* of its possessors: thus being is anything, from God on down, which exists or can exist. And being bears this necessary conceptual relation to all its possessors even before we may know determinately which thing actually exists. Even before knowing that this or that thing exists, we know that if it exists it is a being. Before a man determinately knows his future, unknown wife, he knows her at least by the title of being: she will not be any more than that and certainly not any less. Once anything is known to exist, then the conceptual relation of being to its possessor stiffens into an assertion of that relation of being to the given case, stiffens into the judgment, *this thing is a being or exists.* Thus we move from a transcendental concept of being, which involves its inferiors indeterminately, to a judgment which involves an inferior determinately. Here we have, not a concept of the relation of being to an indeterminate inferior, but the relation given in fact and our judgment upon that fact, *this thing exists.* Let us move on. We observe that in given existent beings their characteristic of being, *i.e.*, of actually existing, is not exhaustively possessed by any of those beings, and this we observe precisely because we observe that there are many beings, and many beings cannot be one, as they would have to be if the act of existing were wholly exhausted in them. We are now in possession of the knowledge that there are grades of being. One more step demonstrates God. The step is this: A gradated being cannot be unless there be the ungradated being. Certainly we could not conceive a grade of being without also conceiving indeterminately an ungradated being. But that is not the point. The point is this: We cannot judge that there is a gradated being without judging that there is also that being without which there would not be the gradated. If there is the lessee there must be the lessor. If there are participants of being there must needs be that in which they participate, viz., being. Now that which beings share must exist if they do; and that in which things share cannot itself be a participant, else it would not be that in which things share; rather, it would be that which shares being, just as any other participant does. This nonparticipant being is God. The argument looks Platonic, and insofar as participation or exemplarism is involved it is Platonic. But there is nothing wrong in exemplarism, nothing wrong in the notion that everything limited has its exemplar. That is dead right. The only difference, a crucial difference it must be admitted, between Platonism and the above argument is that, above, being is not an idea. Being is that which exists or can exist. An idea of being is the idea of a subject of existence indeterminately related to an act of existing, like the idea about a man under an unlettered tombstone: Whoever he is, there he is. But the idea of being is not being. Being is determinately related to an act of existing both in itself and in our predicative knowledge of it. This involves all the difference in the world. If being were an idea, as it is in Platonism, it would surely be true that its exemplar is also an idea. But being is not an idea, and this makes the difference.[4] Beings share in being; hence there must be that in which they share; hence that in which beings share cannot itself be a participant of being, else it would not be that in which other beings share; it would be itself a participant. The nonparticipant being must be absolutely perfect.

¶ *Third observation.* Exemplary causality functions only through the medium of efficient causality. A house is not like its plan until a house is made. However, once there is a house one may argue to the existence of a house-builder either by taking the line of efficient or the line of exemplary causality. Let there be a house. Because it came into existence, there must have been something which made it come into existence; there must have been something, the house plan, which preceded it—an exemplary cause. So in the fourth way, let there be a transcendental perfection. Because it came into existence, there must have been something which made it come into existence, an efficient cause of being. Because it was a gradated transcendental perfection which came into existence, there must have preceded the limited being one which is absolutely perfect. The existence of the exemplar is thus already acquired from the existence of the exemplified. It is not however impertinent to notice, as St. Thomas does, that the exemplar of being is also an efficient cause of being.

¶ *Fourth observation.* God has been out of the category from the moment it was seen that an exemplary cause of being is absolutely perfect. This was in the first and second observations on the third proposition.

[4] Vd. Chap. I.

Variants of the Fourth Way[5]

Once in possession of the principle of participation we may vary the argument of the fourth way as we choose. The following are some such variants of the fourth way.

THE ARGUMENT FROM THE ESSENCES OF THINGS

(1) In actually existent things there are two factors of being: what those things are; their act of existing. These factors are really distinct, not as two beings, but as two principles of one being. Now it is not *because* an existent is of a certain essence or nature that it exists; if it were, the act of existing would be identified with that nature. This is impossible, because the act of existing would then be limited to that nature, and so there would never be anything else but that nature. We must therefore relinquish the hypothesis that existents exist because it is their nature to exist, and we must conclude that natures exist because they participate in, though they are not identical with, being. Now the being in which natures share must be one whose nature it is to exist, else it too would be a participant in being, and that leaves us exactly where we started. To stay at our point of departure is exactly to say that natures exist, yet, in default of a reason why they exist, viz., a being whose nature it is to exist, they do not exist.

(2) Before existing, a thing is possible: it can exist. In this state of possibility a possible being is simply an object of knowledge; it is not a subject of an actual act of existing. Moreover, a possible being is not necessarily known by us, though sometimes it is; a possible being is knowable by us as able to be or to exist. Here too there is a participant in being, a possible participant. There must be therefore the being in which the possible participant can share; if there were not, the possible being would not be possible. The exemplar here must also be the highest being. The relation of the possible being to God's intellect-essence and will is fully treated elsewhere.[6]

---

[5] Cf. St. Thomas Aquinas, *Contra Gentiles,* II, 84; *Sum. Theol.,* I, 79, 4.

[6] Vd. pp. 224–247.

At present all we need in order to prove the exemplar from the exemplified is the new datum, a possible being.

OBSERVATIONS ON THE ARGUMENTS FROM THE ESSENCES OF THINGS

¶ *First observation.* These arguments start from limited beings—beings whose essence is not their act of existing, and which are possible. The fourth way started from transcendental being and saw that it was limited in the instances after it saw that the instances were gradated.

¶ *Second observation.* These arguments as well as the arguments of the fourth way assume the real distinction of essence from its act of existing. But this assumption does not involve any assumption that God exists. To be a participant of being is simply not to be fully being. One can see that, without seeing either that such being is caused or that God causes it. To see that participated being is caused and that it is ultimately caused by God is subsequent to seeing that a participant of being exists. That a participant of being is caused is self-evident. But that there is a participant of being is not self-evident, nor is it proved that a participant is caused to exist until after it is known to exist.

THE ARGUMENT FROM THE CHARACTERISTICS OF SOME KNOWLEDGE[7]

Some knowledge is true, necessary, eternal, immutable. For example, let it be known that two and two make four: such knowledge is of what is so, of what must be so, of what must always be so, and of what cannot be otherwise. Even our knowledge of contingent truths has these characteristics. Caesar crossed the Rubicon is a truth which, once it became a truth, remains true, necessarily, eternally, immutably.

Not all our knowledge has these characteristics. Let a man be thinking of, without mentally saying anything about, Caesar, or

[7] Vd. p. 50.

two, or four, etc. There is nothing in such conceptual knowledge which could justify any estimate upon its truth or upon any characteristic of its truth. Such knowledge has not yet stuck its neck out, has not yet asserted of things-that-are that they are, or of things-that-are-not that they are not. Nor does any degree of knowledge such as opinion, doubt, and so on, fully stick its neck out. It is only when we roundly assert or deny that which should be asserted or denied that we have knowledge with those characteristics which may serve to demonstrate God.

The minor proposition of the proof from the characteristics of knowledge is as follows: Since these characteristics of some knowledge are based upon the correlative characteristics of the objects of which there is knowledge (knowledge is true because the things of which there is true knowledge are as true knowledge describes them; true knowledge is necessary because the things of which there is necessary knowledge are necessary, and so on); since, further, these characteristics of knowledge are participations of truth-being, of the necessity of truth-being, etc., they suppose a nonparticipant truth, a nonparticipant necessary truth, etc.

The minor may be expanded. The relation of an idea to its inferiors is an indeterminate relation. Thus, the idea of a triangle is applicable to all triangles, but there is nothing in the idea determinative of any one triangle. So for being, the idea of being, namely the idea of that which is or can be, does not determine which, of all the things that are or can be, *is* the thing which is or can be. Let us now "exercise," unlimber that indeterminate relation; let us stiffen that indeterminate relation and make it jell into a determinate one. Unlimbered or exercised, the indeterminate relation becomes determinate: this is a triangle, this thing exists or can exist. We have now judged. What has happened? The act of existing of things has been transferred by knowledge from nature-being to truth-being in knowledge: the *esse rerum* has become an *esse verum.* Just as, apart from our true knowledge, there are no natures which are not determinately related to their acts of existing, actual or possible, so in our true knowledge there is no truth-being without a determinate knowledge relation of natures to their act of existing, actual or possible. By the judgment there is exercised in knowledge the act of existing which things exercise in nature. The two acts of existing, in nature and in knowledge, are only analogically the same; nevertheless they are proportionately correlative. This triangle is related to its own act of existing as this triangle is in knowledge related to the predicate "exists." Now these truths and all their characteristics are participated. "This is a triangle" is, in knowledge, no more the only truth than the existent triangle is the only being. "Two and two make four" is no more identified with the necessary than it is with being: there are other "necessaries," other truths. Thus, because truth and its characteristics are exercised relations of subjects of being to the act of existing, because truth-being and all its characteristics are participated, therefore they suppose the nonparticipated truth and the nonparticipated characteristics thereof.

THE ARGUMENT FROM THE MORE OR LESS GOOD

Objects of desire more or less satisfy us. These more or less satisfying objects of desire approach the highest or most satisfactory good which is therefore the existent exemplary cause of participated goods, and which is good without limitation.

It may be noted that this argument is from exemplary causality. The relative goods are real ends which actually do satisfy us more or less. Hence there must be an unlimited exemplary cause of these real ends or goods. Should one argue from final and not from exemplary causality, the participated goods would have to be viewed not as more or less satisfactory goods, but as means by which we are *moved* to, but are not satisfied by, the final end. Means to ends do not satisfy; they are, inasmuch as they participate in the goodness of the end, principles of movement, not of rest. Ends satisfy, and it is with ends that the argument starts.

There are only two objections to the above argument. First, we naturally desire only the universal good, not the highest good, which is not universal.[8] This is true, but it must be noted that the universal good is the principle or starting point of desire. The term of desire, however, is not the universal good. The term of desire is an existent good. Now, if there is no highest good as the term of desire, there would not be the more or less satisfying terms. Secondly, it may be objected that the term of desire is in fact a supernatural good, which cannot even be the term of natural desire. Nevertheless, the natural desire of a spiritual substance is to see God. The only factors needed here to demonstrate the matter is the existence of such a desire and the principle, "nature does nothing in vain." [9]

---

[8] St. Thomas Aquinas, *Sum. Theol.*, I–II, 8, 8.

Suggested Reading

The gradation in being: The fourth way:

Plato, *Republic*, VI, 508; VII, 517; *Timaeus*, 28, 29, 37; *Philebus*, 22.

Aristotle, *Metaph.*, IV, 4.

St. Augustine, *De Civ. Dei*, VIII, 6 (PL 41, coll. 231–232); *De Trin.*, VIII, 3–4 (PL 42, coll. 949–952).

St. Thomas Aquinas, *In II Sent.*, 1, 1, 1; *Contra Gentiles*, I, 13; I, 28; II, 15; II, 84; *Sum. Theol.*, I, 2, 3; I, 44, 1; I, 65, 1; *De Verit.*, XXII, 2; *De Pot.*, III, 5–6.

Chambat, L., O.S.B., "La 'quarta via' de saint Thomas," *Revue Thomiste*, XI, pp. 412–422.

Donovan, Sr. M. Annice, *The Henological Argument for the Existence of God in the Works of St. Thomas Aquinas.*

Heris, C., O.P., "La preuve de l'éxistence de Dieu par les vérités éternelles," *Revue Thomiste*, X, pp. 330–341.

Joly, R., *La preuve de l'éxistence de Dieu par les degrés de l'être: "quarta vie" de la somme théologique.*

Lemaitre, C., S.J., "La preuve de l'éxistence de Dieu par les degrés des êtres," *Nouvelle Revue Théologique*, 1927, pp. 331–339; 436–468.

---

[9] On this whole question see H. de Lubac, S.J., *Surnaturel*, Études Historiques (Paris: Aubier, 1946).

The Fifth Way

THE STATEMENT OF THE FIFTH WAY[1]

(1) We see natural bodies, which lack cognition, acting towards an end. (2) Things which lack cognition do not tend to an end except as directed thereto by one who knows. (3) Therefore there exists an intelligent being who orders things naturally to an end. This we call God.

OBSERVATIONS ON THE FIRST PROPOSITION

¶ *First observation.* The proposition is based upon the observable data that some bodies always or more often than not act in the same way: the adrenalin gland produces its secretion, plants grow, fish swim, etc. These data inevitably suggest that the reason for the observed repetition lies in an unobserved tendency on the part of the agents involved to repeat their operations. Before acting, some natural agents tend to act along definite lines. Bodies, for example, tend to fall. This fixation or bent which bodies have, before acting, upon acting along certain lines is described by saying that some natural bodies act for an end. To act for an end means to act because of a "set," pre-existent to acting, towards acting along certain lines. Not all bodies act along definite lines. Bodies do not always fall. Nevertheless they all tend to act along certain lines. Bodies always tend to fall, and this tendency of theirs to some definite operation, *e.g.*, falling, is precisely described by saying that their falling is the term or end of this tendency. The thyroid tends to secrete, the stomach tends to digest, fish tend to swim. In sum, we see that some bodies act for an end.

---

[1] St. Thomas Aquinas, *Sum. Theol.*, I, 2, 3.

¶ *Second observation.* The proposition that some bodies act for an end can be expanded into an unexceptionable metaphysical principle: every agent acts for an end.[2] Every agent must, before its operation, have two "sets." First, there is the set by which an agent will act along certain lines if it acts at all. The reason why every agent must act along certain lines if it acts at all is simply because an uncertain line of action is a contradiction in terms, like riding off in all directions at once. The indefinite cannot exist. Now, the only way to insure that an agent's operation will be definite is to locate in the agent before it acts a preorientation to act thus or so. In order that it be adrenalin which the gland secretes (and it *is* adrenalin), it must needs be that the gland, before it secretes, will secrete adrenalin, precisely because it is an adrenal gland, not a thyroid. Secondly, there is the set by which an agent will act rather than not, along the lines of its first set. In default of such an urge or bent towards acting rather than not acting, there would be no reason for acting, and in default of a reason for acting there would be, by hypothesis, no acting. But there is acting. The gland does secrete adrenalin. Thus, before it acts there is *that* about every agent which accounts for, first, the kind of thing it does, and secondly, the doing of the kind of thing it does. The kind of thing an agent does is traceable to the kind of agent it is. The doing of the kind of thing it does is traceable to a bent or fixation of the agent upon acting rather than not acting along the lines of its nature.

The necessity of there being the first set is expressed by the principle of proper causality: Every agent produces its like. The necessity of there being the second set is expressed by the principle of final causality: Every agent acts on account of some end.

¶ *Third observation.* Only knowledge and appetite can assure the double preordination in agents, before they act, towards (1) acting (2) in a certain way. The reason for this is apparent once one grasps the following points. First, acting in a certain way is, compendiously, the term of activity. Upon that term agents are fixed: before they act they must act in a certain way. Secondly, although agents before operating are bent upon the term of their operations, nevertheless there is, before operation, no actual term to operation at all. How then can an inexistent term render an account of the existent sets? To take the first set, an agent before it acts must act in a certain way: it will do something of the sort which it itself is. But there is nothing, before an agent operates, which is of the sort that it itself is. As to the second set, although an agent is bent on acting, nevertheless there is no acting before acting; and so it would seem that an agent is bent on nothing. The questions then are these: How can the lines of operation be fixed before operation when precisely there are no lines? How can an agent be bent on acting when there is actually nothing, no acting as yet upon which the agent is supposedly bent? Thus we are faced with two equally certain propositions: before acting agents are bent on acting in a certain way; before acting there is actually no certain line of activity. The only way to assure the existence of a term of operation, which term must exist (because it is upon it that action is fixed), is to locate the existence of that term in knowledge and appetite. The term must be located in knowledge, because in default of an actually existent and specificative object of action, only knowledge can assure a likeness between an agent and what it will do. Two brothers are alike if there are two. If there is only one, they are not alike in fact; and if nevertheless there is a likeness, it must be that the likeness is located in knowledge alone. This is the case here. An agent is like its inexistent operation. The agent must therefore, in default of an existent term, be like that term in knowledge alone. The term must also be located in appetite, because in default of an actually existent and final cause of acting, which cause must exist (because it is upon acting that the agent is bent), only tendency or appetite can assure that at least the term exists in the tendency of the agent. In sum, the term of action must exist, because it causes. Now the only two forms of existing are actual existence and intentional. The term does not actually exist. Therefore it exists intentionally: in knowledge and appetite. The insistence in the fifth way is upon the knowledge factor of all activity.

---

[2] Vd. pp. 90 sqq.

¶ *Fourth observation.* Not all agents have knowledge. Instrumental agents, as instrumental, have none. The knowledge which presides over the activity of instruments is the knowledge of a principal cause. Moreover, not all agents are related to their operations in the same ways. The kind of activity which natural agents perform, their tendency to perform, and their actual performance, all this is given with their natures. Of course, violence could hinder such agents from executing or performing their operations, but the violent is not natural, nor is the natural violent. Inanimate agents must act along definite lines, barring violence. Their set towards acting and acting thus or so, as well as their actual execution of their actions, none of this is due to their causality. For a stone to fall, barring hindrance, this is to be a heavy body. Its falling is not caused by a stone. Animate nonsentient agents have left to their own causality only the execution of their operations. Plants grow by their own causality of growth. Animate sentient agents cause not only the execution of their operations, as do plants, they also cause in a measure the kind of operation they perform. A horse will eat grass if he sees or smells it, but he need not see it, and in that sense need not eat it. Rational agents, lastly, cause the execution and the kind of their operations in such wise that they may act thus or so, or not at all, because so the matter stands in their knowledge. A man may eat steak or mutton, because his knowledge differentiates between the good of either course of action; he may also eat neither, because his knowledge also differentiates between the good of eating and of not eating at all.[3]

In sum, noncognitive agents do not cause the execution or performance of their operations. Nonsentient animate agents cause the execution of their operations. Sentient agents cause the execution of their operations and, in a measure, the kind of those operations. Rational agents cause the execution of their activity, its kind, and, if they wish, their own inactivity as well.

---

[3] Cf. St. Thomas Aquinas, *Sum. Theol.*, I, 18, 1–3.

OBSERVATIONS ON THE SECOND PROPOSITION

¶ *First observation.* It has been established in the third observation on the first proposition that all activity comes in part from knowledge, because knowledge alone assures the similarity between the nature of the agent and its as yet inexistent operation. In the fourth observation upon the first proposition it was suggested that not all agents know. The final reason for this may now be given. Even if all agents did know, they would have at least some noncognitive bents. No cognitive agent in our experience is identically its act of knowing. Whence, before knowing, cognitive agents (even assuming that all agents are cognitive) must have bents upon knowing. Now these bents are noncognitive if there is to be a first act of knowing. If they were not, there would be no first act of knowing, and a first act of knowing there must be, because these agents are unidentified with their acts of knowledge. Thus the hypothesis of universal panpsychism is not only gratuitous, it is also impossible even in the area of cognitive agents.

In sum, since knowledge presides over all activity, since not all activity is cognitive, it follows that the activity of noncognitive agents does not come from their knowledge. They have none. Nevertheless their activity comes from knowledge, else we cannot get any intelligible line from the agent to its operation. Some operations look as though they were meant, calculated, devised; therefore they must be meant if there is no other explanation and this one explains. To say that the stomach is not meant to digest, is to say that we do not know the difference between the stomach and the ear.

¶ *Second observation.* We are now at the point of seeing by proof that there exists an unlimited act of intelligence which is the cause of activity. Recall the second way: experienced causes are not identically their acts of causing; therefore there must be a cause of their causing; a cause of causing either has its own causing caused or it does not. If it does not, that cause is uncaused causing; if it does, then caused causing postulates uncaused causing, because regress is irrelevant and impossible. Note well that a cause-causing is a cause-existing-as-causing. Whence, uncaused-causing causes causes-existing-as-causing. The only factor needed in the fifth way in order to demonstrate that the uncaused-causing, proved in the second way, is an *intellectual* act of causing is this: Caused-causing involves knowledge (third observation on the first proposition). Granted this factor in the data, it follows that uncaused causing is uncaused causal knowing.

¶ *Third observation.* The demonstration just given works just as well whether the data be noncognitive or cognitive agents. When the data are noncognitive agents, as they are in the letter of the text in the *Summa*, the demonstration seems a bit more apparent. Certainly the knowledge which is involved in all activity cannot be due to agents which are demonstrably noncognitive. Therefore the knowledge involved in the activity of such agents is immediately traceable not to them but to an uncaused causal act of knowing which causes such agents to be-existing-as-fixed-through knowledge (not theirs) upon ends. When the data are cognitive agents, the demonstration of the existence of uncaused causal knowing, which causes such agents, seems less apparent, because some of the activity of such agents can be immediately traced to the knowledge of such agents. Nevertheless even here the demonstration of an uncaused act of knowing which causes cognitive agents to exist-as-causing-by-their-knowledge is still good. Although the knowledge acts of knowing natures is traceable to them, nevertheless the existence of knowing natures is not due to those natures. Not caring, so to say, what it summons to existence, the act of existing bids both cognitive and noncognitive natures to be. If then, the act of existing is an act of cognitive natures, if God causes those natures to exist, He is causing them to exist-as-knowing their end. Now the cause of the existence of knowing natures is a knowing cause. The only difference between God's causality of noncognitive and of cognitive natures is that the uncaused-causal-act-of-knowing causes cognitive agents to-be-existing-as-fixed-through-knowledge (theirs)—upon ends. God's knowledge-act causes noncognitive agents to-be-existing-as-fixed-by-knowledge (not theirs but His), upon ends.

OBSERVATION ON THE CONCLUSION

The uncaused act of knowing we call God precisely because such knowing is identically the knower, else God's knowledge would also be caused and therefore not a first knowledge-cause of agents fixed upon ends.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS ON THE PROOF

¶ *First observation.* The principle of finality, *i.e.*, that every agent acts on account of some end, holds true whether it be principal or instrumental agents which are involved. If the agent involved be a principal agent, the principle of finality is qualified as intrinsic finality. If the agent involved be an instrumental agent, the principle of finality is qualified as extrinsic finality. The reason is obvious. In intrinsic finality the end of the principal agent, before it actually exists, exists as preformed or intended by nature or knowlledge within the principal agent. In extrinsic finality the end of the instrument, before it actually exists, exists as preformed by nature or knowledge outside the instrument but inside the principal agent.

Either instance of finality would serve to prove God as an uncaused causal act of knowing. Intrinsic finality leads to an uncaused causal act of knowing which causes the existence of principal agents. Extrinsic finality leads to an uncaused act of knowing which causes the existence of instrumental agents. The only requisite for the proof of God as an uncaused causal act of knowing which causes instrumental agents is the existence of instruments; for instance, food is an instrument of nourishment. Much of the time we do not know either what agents are fixed upon or what they are for in an instrumental sense. Nevertheless we know that all agents are fixed upon an end, and often we know what the end of a principal or instrumental agent is. The underlying reason why instruments or extrinsic finality demonstrate God is the principle that the end of the agent and of the patient is the same in different relations, for the impression which the agent intends to produce, and which the patient intends to receive, are one and the same.[4] The stomach is meant to digest and it is digestion for which food as an instrument is meant. There must therefore be some intelligent cause for the existence of both agent and patient since both are fixed by knowledge upon their respective ends.

---

[4] St. Thomas Aquinas, *Sum. Theol.*, I, 44, 4, *Resp.*

¶ *Second observation.* The proof from finality fails to prove God as a creative act of knowing in the measure that the data, agents-existing-as-fixed-upon-ends, are read as agents-already-existing-and-thereafter-fixed-on-ends. Should it be supposed that an agent exists and that its fixation upon an end accrues to it after it exists, then the proof would prove only the existence of a "fixer" upon ends, quite as a watch proves the existence of one who arranged its parts. This is the proof of the "Author of Nature" of the eighteenth century. It is a respectable proof. Just as we may know when jam is stolen that the cat did not do it, so may we know when confronted with order in nature that some intelligent designer had a hand in that order. This is a sound position, but it does not go far enough. The drift of the fifth way is towards the existence of an act of knowing which is the cause of the existence of natures fixed upon ends.

The manner in which that term of the fifth way emerges is, we have seen, as follows. An agent-fixed-upon-an-end is an agent-existing-as-fixed-upon-an-end. Now such a datum demands an intelligent cause, because fixation upon an end demands knowledge. Further, an intelligent cause of the datum cannot, in the last analysis, presuppose the existence of the datum, because it is precisely the existence of the datum which is in question. That it is the existence of the datum which is in question is apparent because (1) the datum does exist, (2) yet not because its existence is given with its nature, else its act of existing, identical with its nature, would be absorbed by that nature, and so the fact of plurality would be impossible—whence, the data are caused to exist by an intellectual act of creative knowing. The proof holds for all data involving knowledge, principal or instrumental agents. Instrumental agents do not exist as instruments until they are instrumentalised, and then they exist as instruments in virtue of the finality of their principal cause. Now, principal agents demand an intellectual cause of their existing as principal agents, the noncognitive principal agents demanding an unlimited knowledge-act causative of the existence of their natures, the cognitive principal agents demanding that same unlimited act as causative of their knowing natures.

¶ *Third observation.* It would be incredible, were it not a fact, that many think the principle of finality and the proof of God based thereon are weakened or destroyed by chance events, or frustrations in nature, or disasters. Voltaire crowed over the earthquake at Lisbon as if it forever destroyed the tradition of a provident God. There is, however, no more arresting evidence of finality and God's existence than such events. They leave a man only with these alternatives: to curse, or to pray, or to have nothing at all to say. The first two alternatives suppose God. The last is the end of discourse.

The principle of finality is not to the effect that agents attain the ends upon which they are fixed; it is to the effect that agents are fixed upon ends. Hence, frustrations leave finality intact in things. Nor does the principle of finality imply that we must know the ends upon which agents are fixed; it implies that we know that agents are fixed upon ends. Sometimes we do indeed know what these ends are: the stomach is for digestion, and so is food. But sometimes we do not know. Whether we know or do not know what things are for, we do know that agents are fixed upon ends. Hence, frustrations leave finality intact in our minds.

The only respectable objection against the principle of finality is the chance event. The chance event alone seems to be an exception to the principle of finality. It does not seem calculated, meant, devised. If so, may not every event be by chance, just as some events most certainly are?

The chance event is the convergence of many causal lines whose convergence is not given by the causality of the lines.[5] A man eats pungent food, then goes to the well to drink. There, a band of cutthroats murder him. There is nothing in the causality which leads the man to the well that explains why he is murdered. Nor is there anything in the causality of the band of cutthroats which leads to the murder of *this* man. Anyone would have served their purpose. The two lines (there are many more) are independent of each other. They converge, and their convergence is the chance event precisely because that *convergence* is not given by the causality of the lines.

---

[5] Aristotle, *Phys.*, I, 2, 185b 19 sqq.; *Metaph.*, VI, 2, 1027a 17 sqq.; VI, 3, 1027b 1 sqq.; St. Thomas Aquinas, *Sum. Theol.*, I, 115, 6, *Resp.; In Periherm.*, I, lect. 14.

Now, convergent lines presuppose either that the lines proceed according to causality or do not so proceed. But it is impossible that they do not so proceed, because then there would be no event at all which would be recognizably a chance event: all events would be by chance. "We do not ascribe to chance or mere coincidence the frequency of rain in winter, but frequent rain in summer we do (Aristotle is in Greece); nor heat in dog-days, but only if we have it in winter."[6] Thus, if the convergence of lines did not presuppose a causality in the lines which is *not* due to chance or convergence, there would be nothing recognizably fortuitous at all. But there is. Thence it is that chance presupposes causality. If there is counterfeit coin there must be true coin, or else we should not even know the counterfeit. If there are the insane, there must be the sane, unless we wish to say that everyone is insane, and then nobody is. Chance cannot cause chance, but causality can. Chance results from determinately moving causal lines which converge.

Since the convergence of many lines is not given in the causality of the lines, although there is causality in the lines, the question arises: why do the lines converge? The only answer in an existential metaphysics is this: The lines converge because (1) they are many and (2) they are made to be many by a cause of their existence. A train on a single track with no cross or front friction will not hit anything. In the case of billions of trains on billions of tracks some of them may bump. Why? Because there are billions. Why are there billions? Because there is a cause of their plurality. In an existential metaphysics God is thus the cause of plurality, and so He is the cause of the chance event in a way which differs from the way He causes the caused event. God causes the acorn to cause the oak. God causes the acorn to turn into dust upon stony ground, because He causes both the acorn and the stony ground. Thus, He causes the causality of the acorn and the stony ground. But He does not cause causal lines to converge by *their* causality (convergence is not in *their* causality). He causes them to converge by *His* causality of their plurality and direction.

---

[6] Aristotle, *Phys.*, II, 8, 198b 37. Cf. Plato, *Phaedo,* 98 sqq.

This is not to say that because God, in causing plurality, causes chance events, therefore there is no such thing as chance events with Him. This is rather to say that precisely because of God's causality there are chance events. He causes events to come by chance because He causes the plural lines of causality and their convergence. Thus the chance event is calculated by, and known to, God before it happens; yet it remains chance because convergence is not given in the causality of the converging lines. Convergence is given in the causality of that cause which makes many lines to converge.

The only possible objection to this account of a chance event is that the chance event is imprevisible. Is it now? Assume a cause of plural lines and of their convergence. By hypothesis that convergence would be known by such a cause, only, such a cause would not know that convergence by the medium of the causality of the lines (since convergence is not in the causality of the lines). Such a cause would know that convergence is its own causality of plurality and its convergence. Convergence of plural lines can be seen by anyone who sees the lines and their direction. Even we could do that, and in selected cases we do exactly that. Casey Jones saw that the two locomotives were "agoing to bump." The only difference between God's knowledge and ours concerning the chance event is that His is always certain, because He is the cause of plurality; ours is never certain except when we cause convergence, and then it is rarely certain, because we cannot be sure we are commanding all the lines. Imprevisibility does not define chance; it rather is a rough-and-ready description of our most constant attitude towards the chance event. Usually we do not know when such an event will occur, but when we are properly placed we can foresee a chance event. Thus a chance event is not defined as imprevisible. A chance event is defined as the convergence of many lines of causality whose convergence, not given in the causality of the lines, is given with their plurality and direction.

It is the obscure but quite sound awareness we all have of these matters which makes the chance event such an arresting evidence of our convictions concerning finality and its connection with the existence of God. It is because we are convinced of finality that the chance event arrests us. We should never realize how deeply we always relied upon natures-fixed-upon-ends unless we ran across the chance event, like men who never know they have a stomach until it hurts. It is the hurt which makes us realize that the stomach was there all the time. Just so, it is the chance event which makes us aware that finality was there all the time. How indeed could we recognize the chance event unless there were set over against it in our knowledge the caused event? And how could there be a chance event unless there were set over against it in things the normal event? And as evidence of the existence of God, the chance event is in a way even stronger than is the evidence of the caused event. The chance event which is disastrous puts us abruptly, brutally, inexorably before these alternatives: either this disaster *especially* comes from God, or else there is no God. Like a sound box on the ear, the chance event is an unexpected explosion in our well-laid trains to other ends. When this happens we begin to bawl and squeal like children; if good children, we must later conclude that of all the good things which mother has designed for us, this clout *especially* is good, or else the rest was mere pretense. If disaster be not meant, how can good fortune be? If mother did not mean to hurt, how can she have meant to help us? Now it is impossible for us to acquiesce long in the conviction that the rest is pretense. It is impossible to remain long in tears, always to face the prospect that all is barbarism, to look always askance at a future in which nothing is to make sense. Greece and Rome tried to and failed.[7] We must come back therefore to the position: this disaster particularly is from God or else there is no God.

---

[7] C. Cochrane, *Christianity and Classical Culture* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1939), Ch. XII.

Suggested Reading

Final causality: The fifth way:

St. John Damascene, *De Fide Orthodoxa*, I, 3 (PG 94, col. 795).

St. Thomas Aquinas, *In Phys.*, II, lect. 4, 7, 8; *In Metaph.*, XII, lect. 9; *Contra Gentiles*, I, 13; II, 23–24; III, 1–2; *Sum. Theol.*, I, 2, 3; I, 18, 3; I, 44, 4; *De Verit.*, V, 1–2; *De Pot.*, III, 15.

The chance event:

Plato, *Phaedo*, 98 sqq.

Aristotle, *Phys.*, I, 2; II, 8; *Metaph.*, VII, 2–3; XII, 7 and 10.

St. Thomas Aquinas, *In Periherm.*, I, lect. 14; *In Phys.*, II, lect. 7–10; *In Metaph.*, XII, lect. 9; *Contra Gentiles*, I, 44; II, 39; II, 74; *Sum. Theol.*, I, 19, 8; I, 105, 5; I, 115, 6; I, 116, 1; *De Verit.*, XI, 1.

Cochrane, C., *Christianity and Classical Culture*, Ch. XII.

Junkersfeld, Sr. M. Julienne, *The Aristotelian-Thomistic Conception of Chance.*

Simon, Y., *Prévoir et savoir*, pp. 15–106.

X · FURTHER CLARIFICATION OF THE PROOF

This chapter assembles some clarifications which would have lengthened the preceding chapters beyond measure.

THE PROOF FROM AN ACCIDENTAL SERIES OF CAUSES

On page 99 it was stated that a series of accidentally ordered causes can prove God's existence, but not in the same way as can a series of per se causes. The proof from an accidental series might run thus. If the series is finite, it must have a first member, which must therefore be caused to exist by a cause of existence. If the series is potentially infinite (without, *i.e.*, a first member), there is still lacking in that series any reason for the *existence* of its members, because they are all a total insufficient cause of existence. Therefore. . . . As is clear, it is the existence of the members of an accidental series which is in question, not their causality. In a per se series, however, it is the causality of the members which is immediately in question. Members of an accidental series did not by hypothesis cause this effect, but by hypothesis they existed. Members of a per se series did by hypothesis cause this effect, and since they existed as causing, therefore they must have a cause of their existence as *causing*. Members of an accidental series must have a cause of their existence. Thus the proof of God from an accidental series is reducible to the proof from contingency, the third way; but the proof from causality is not reducible to the third way.

WHAT CAUSED CAUSES CAUSE

On page 16 it was stated that no caused cause is the cause of being. What then do they cause if not being?

An efficient cause causes either that a thing become or that it exist. An efficient cause of becoming is related to the act of existing only through the medium of its own effect, the act of becoming; it is the "becoming" alone which an efficient caused cause of it effects. The act of existing of a subject which is becoming or has become something is only indirectly related to the cause of becoming. For example, before I model wax there exists wax. I do not cause wax to exist. The act-of-existing-as-wax is presupposed to my activity of modeling it. During the process of modeling, I cause the act-of-existing-as-wax to be an-act-of-existing-as-wax-becoming-modeled. After change I am no longer related either to the process or to the product. My only job was to cause that which existed (wax) to be qualified as becoming different. I did not cause the subject of becoming to exist before the process, nor do I cause that subject to persist after the process. The same analysis holds fundamentally for the relation of a caused cause to its effect of substantial change.

An efficient cause of being is one whose proper effect is the act of existing. In default of such a cause there would be nothing: nothing antecedent to a subject of becoming, no process of becoming, nothing which remains achieved after the process. Sometimes a cause of becoming is called a qualified (*secundum quid*) cause of being. This means only that a cause of becoming is the cause of the qualification, accidental or substantial, of a subject of an act of existing, as just explained.

MEN THINK THERE IS A GOD

A confirmatory argument for the existence of God can be formed from the premise of the practically universal assent of mankind to His existence. Only two points need to be established: the fact of a practically universal consent; the inexplicability of such a fact upon any such grounds as ignorance, error, etc. The argument might then run thus: though all men can be wrong some of the time, and some of them all of the time, all men cannot be always wrong, unless the attainment of truth be an impossibility. Now, practically all men have always believed in God. Therefore. . . . The proof of the minor is drawn from anthropology,[1] and the proof of that part of the major which implies that the attainment of truth is possible is drawn from epistemology.

To act as if there were no God is more than possible. Not to think there is a God is also possible, because it is possible to refrain from thinking. The Lancashire shepherd, who was thought to be deeply contemplative, said to the one who asked him what he was thinking about, "Mostly nowt." To think, however, that there is no God, and to think so without ever strongly suspecting that one may be wrong—this men cannot do. The demonstration that they cannot do this, though drawn mainly from revealed theology, can also be constructed from the field of epistemology.

HOW GOD IS NAMED BEING

On page 59 it was stated that we do not know what God is. The remark may now be qualified.

"Being" means either a subject which connotes an act of existing, or an act of existing which connotes a subject thereof. The first is "being" as a noun; the second is "being" as a verb. The "being" signified by the verb is, in God, identically the subject of that act. *God exists* means that the act of existing is identically God. Moreover, since all predicates of God are conceived by us as qualifications of His act of existing, and since by hypothesis God is identically His own act of existing, it follows that just as He is identically an act of existing, so is He identically all that can properly qualify His act of existing. Wisdom in God is His act of existing; so is God's goodness, and beauty, and so on. In short, God is identically all that we must conceive Him to have. Not so with creatures. When we say *this is a man* or *this man exists*, the act of existing which is explicitly signified in *this man exists*, and which is implicitly signified in *this is a man*, is not identically the subject of the act of existing. In both cases the act of existing affects the subject of it so as by being caused by God. "God is the being of everything, not the essential, but the causal being." [2] Thus, God is the "being," signified by the verb, by way and only by way of predication or judgment. The reason is: Only judgment can assert an identity, formal or *in re*, of an act of existing with its subject. In God the identity of subject with act is formal.

---

[1] Vd. P. W. Schmidt, S.V.D., *Der Ursprung der Gottesidee*, 6 vols. (Münster, 1926).

Being signified by the noun is conceived by us as that of which the act of existing, actual or possible, is the act. Now God—because in Him there is no subject of "existing" which is not identically that "existing,"—cannot be successfully conceived by us in a concept which always dissociates the two factors, subject and act, which are not dissociated in fact. Indeed, since *all* our concepts dissociate a subject, *e.g.*, man, fish, etc., from its act of existing, we cannot conceive God at all. In sum, since all our concepts are limited understandings, at least because they are of subjects which may or may not exist; since further these concepts are answers to the question, what is this? we do not know what God is.

This is not to say that we cannot judge that *God exists*, *is good*, and so on. This is rather to say that we cannot *conceive* what God's predicates are in Him; we can only *judge* that they are His predicates.

The reason why we can so judge is because God is the cause of those predicates by being their first cause. This allows us to judge, first, that the predicates are in Him, because He causes them, and second, that they are set in Him in a way inconceivable by us, because He is the first cause of them. We see the direction of the spire but its peak is lost for us in the being of God. Should we be at the tip of the spire, as in the Beatific Vision, we should see that it is exactly where it was judged to be (God *is* being, *is* good), only we have no idea, until then, what that predicate was up *there*.

"Being" therefore as naming a subject of an act of existing does not name God inasmuch as such being must be conceived by us as affected by an act of existing. However, inasmuch as there *is* a subject of existing which is identically the act of existing, there *is* the One named by "being" the noun. Only, we have no concept of what the noun names; we only judge, truly, that it names God.

---

[2] St. Thomas Aquinas, *In I Sent.*, 8, 1, 2, *Sol.*

In sum, we must conceive that God has all His predicates. But that is not the way God is: He is all His predicates. Hence our concepts are not of God; they are of creatures. On the other hand our judgments reach to the act of existing of both God and creatures. God does exist, but not in the way we must conceive Him, viz., as a subject affected by an act of existing; He exists only in the way we judge Him, viz., He is.

Another way of putting the matter is thus. In the act of existing which is God there is nothing but an act of existing, as in pure gold there is no alloy. In the act of existing which summons creatures to be, there is something less, as in gold alloy. God is exclusively being, as pure gold is exclusively gold. (He is not exclusively being as man is exclusively mirthful. There are other beings besides God.) Now we cannot conceive what that being is which is nothing else but an act of existing, precisely because no concept can lay hold of an act of existing. Only judgment can do that. No doubt we can conceive existence after the fashion of essence, but the act of existing is not an essence, nor is it known by knowing essence. Thus, all the knowledge we have of God is predicative, not conceptual. One might say that content or what our concepts represent is in God (goodness is in God), but not as we conceive content. As conceived, content is the subject, not the act, of existing. But what is in God is God.

OTHER PROOFS OF GOD

Henri Bergson[3] argues for the existence of God from the testimony of the Christian mystics. The argument is good. The context of the argument, however, is to the effect that there is no other valid argument but the testimony of mystics. It is this context which would need examination in the field of epistemology.

---

[3] H. Bergson, *Essai sur les données immédiates de la conscience* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1944), Ch. III; *Matière et mémoire* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1946), Ch. III; *L'Évolution créatrice* (Paris: F. Alcan, 1908), Ch. IV; *Les deux sources de la morale et de la religion* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1942), Ch. III.

Maurice Blondel argues for the existence of God from the deficiencies of creatures.[4] The drift of the argument is good, but as with Bergson's argument, its context seems suspect. The context leans, in epistemology, towards idealism, and in theology towards pelagianism. Perhaps these leanings are due to a defective expression, by the author, of his philosophy. Bergson has no such defect. At any rate, the matter would have to be argued out with Blondel in epistemology.

Mortimer Adler argues that

> if the proof of God's existence must be an argument for the existence of a creative cause—or, more generally, *a cause of being*—then it cannot proceed directly from the facts of motion or becoming, nor can it proceed through the dependence of secondary causes upon a first cause; for if God is directly and without intermediaries the cause of the being of things, then His existence should be demonstrable directly from *their being*, which is His proper and unique effect.[5]

Mr. Adler's points are these: (1) God's causality cannot be *known* to be involved in the motion and causation of natural agents *before* He is proved to exist; (2) *after* God is proved to exist, then God's causality can be known to be involved in the motion and causation of natural agents. In support of the first point, the crucial one, Mr. Adler argues: We cannot *know* that a natural agent is related to God as instrumental to principal cause in the production of generation or motion until we know God exists, because an effect (before we know that God exists), is wholly ascribable to the natural agent, as St. Thomas says (*Contra Gentiles*, III, 70).[6] In sum, God cannot be proved as a *causa fiendi* of known effects, but only as a *causa essendi*. Thus, Mr. Adler is denying that God's existence can be *proved* from motion or secondary causing; he is not denying

[4] M. Blondel, *La Pensée* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1948), Vol. I, Pt. III, Ch. III, pp. 159–186; *L'Être et les êtres* (Paris: F. Alcan, 1935), pp. 146–221.

[5] M. J. Adler, "The Demonstration of God's Existence," *The Thomist* (The Maritain Volume), V, (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1943), p. 192.

[6] *Ibid.*, pp. 201, a. (2); b. (1), (2); p. 203, (3); p. 204, (7).

that God can be known to cause motion and second causing *after* He is proved to exist as a *causa essendi.*

Contrary to this position it has been argued in the proof of God that God's operation as the *sole* cause of being and as the *first cause* of motion and second causation *can* be known from motion and second causation.[7]

[7] Vd. St. Thomas Aquinas, *Sum. Theol.*, I, 19, 8, ad 5; I 105, 5; I–II, 67, 1, ad 3; I–II, 109, 1 and 3; *De Pot.*, III, 7, et ad 7; *Contra Gentiles*, III, 67; *In Phys.*, II, 2.

To repeat the argument (vd. pp. 109–112), (1) becoming or causing is not identically the subject which becomes or causes. The subject of becoming or causing is related to its becoming or causing as potency is related to act: to the act "of the imperfect" in the case of becoming; to the act "of the perfect" in the case of causing. To deny this relation in the instance of becoming is to revive the error of Parmenides. To deny this relation in the instance of causing is to deny the existence of a power to cause. Causing does not precede, or extinguish, or identify itself with, the power to cause. Thus the subject of both becoming and causing is potential with reference to the respective acts of becoming and causing. Now, no potency is reduced to act except through something in act. Therefore there is something in act, an extrinsic cause of both becoming and causing.

(2) Once granted an extrinsic cause, it becomes apparent (a) that there exists a first movent and first cause of motion and causing which (b) is the sole cause of being: first, a first movent and a first cause, because it is no more apparent in the case of the extrinsic agent (whose existence is already proved in (1)) why *its* power to move and to cause is joined to *its* operation than it was in the case of the subject with which we began, *unless there exists an extrinsic agent whose operation is identified with the subject thereof.* Well, we need a thoroughly intelligible account of motion and causing, do we not? This is it: a movent and a cause whose operation is identically the subject thereof: an unmoved movent, an uncaused cause of causing. Such a movent and cause is the sole cause of being, because it possesses the perfection which it communicates, else it would have to get that perfection elsewhere, and so it would not be the first movent and cause (as it was proved to be), and because the perfection which it communicates is a being-which-is-existing-as-moved, a being-which-is-existing-as-causing. Why *that* perfection? Why not *just* motion and *just* causing in a subject *already* existing? Because there *is* no motion apart from the subject which is moved, there *is* no causing apart from a subject which is causing; nor is there any actual subject of actual motion apart from its actual motion, or any actual subject of actual causing apart from its actual causing. If the qualification (of being moved, of causing) is caused, if there is no actual subject of that actual qualification *before* the qualification, then the subject whose motion and causing is being caused is a subject which is caused to-be-a-subject-existing-as-moved, or a subject which is caused to-be-a-subject-existing-as-causing. Whence, God is the cause of being.

And He alone is that cause. Second agents presuppose that the subject upon which they are to go to work is actual only as actualized by an act which they did *not* cause. Thus water is actually water before it is heated. Heat does not cause the water to be water. Heat causes what is water to be hot *(Continued)*

Mr. Adler is deeply and rightly convinced that the proof of God must be the proof of a *causa essendi*. Only, he does not seem to see how the necessity of a *causa essendi* grows out of the data. He does not see that because, I believe, he has got the data back end to. The data are not: beings which cannot cause existence. The data are:

---

water. So for causing: a painter is actually a painter before he paints; the cause of his painting does not cause him to be a painter; it causes a painter to paint. Second agents do not presuppose the actual qualification which they do cause in a subject. Thus second agents presuppose a subject which is both actual and potential: actual in relation to what the subject is without the causality of second agents; potential in relation to what the subject can be because of their causality. Now, no agent-cause presupposes an act of existing, howsoever qualified, of the actual subject thereof—not unless we are prepared to admit that an effect precedes the cause. Second agents effect in some subject, which actually exists but is only potentially a subject of *further* qualification, the further qualification of that subject's act of existing. And since second agents are themselves subjects in exactly the same relation to the causes of *their* becoming and *their* causing as are the subjects which *they* affect, since further regress here is irrelevant, and infinite regress is impossible, therefore second agents are precisely *second* agents of becoming and causing. Thus God is the first agent of becoming and causing, and the sole cause of being. Second agents do not directly effect being at all, and they are only second causes of change and causing.

In sum, Mr. Adler maintains that "when an effect [becoming and generation] is not the *proper* (*i.e.*, unique, exclusive) effect of a single cause, but the effect of cooperative action on the part of several causes related as principal and instrumental, it is impossible to infer from the effect the existence of any cause not knowable apart from the effect," because, according to St. Thomas, (1) natural agents are genuinely efficacious (*Contra Gentiles*, III, 69), and (2) both God and the natural agent effect change and generation, each wholly and each differently, in such wise that the whole effect is ascribable to the instrument and to the principal agent [God] (*Contra Gentiles*, III, 70). Therefore (3) we are not impelled to infer the existence of God in order to give an adequate casual explanation of the effect. Mr. Adler maintains, in short, that we cannot know that the natural agent is related to God as instrumental to principal cause in the production of a natural effect *until we know that God exists* (Cf. M. J. Adler, *op. cit.*, pp. 201–202).

In reply it might be said that we *can* know that a natural agent is related to God as instrumental (analogically instrumental, of course) to principal cause, precisely because we can know that no natural agent is the cause of the juncture of its operation to itself, and for these reasons: First, no natural agent is identically its operation. If it were, it would have no power to, but would always be, acting; and further, after acting there would be left no power in it to act again. Secondly, there must be a cause of the juncture of its operation to the natural agent, because the natural agent itself cannot effect that juncture, and juncture by identification of operation with the agent has been excluded. The natural agent itself cannot effect the juncture—if it could, it would have to be in the very act of causing the very thing it was supposed to cause, viz., the act of causing. Thirdly, granted a cause of the juncture beings whose existence is caused.[8] Surely beings which cannot cause existence must be caused if they exist. But the existence of beings which must be caused is the starting point of the argument; beings which cannot cause existence is not the starting point.

The above criticism is in terms of Mr. Adler's own exposition. In terms of what seems to be the root of the matter, Mr. Adler is not seeing that an actual subject of actual generation and of change cannot be presupposed to *any* causality. In being made to be different, accidentally or substantially, an actual subject of act is being made to be. By what? By a *causa essendi* which is also the first cause of change and generation; by a *causa fiendi* which is only a second cause of change and generation.

Suggested Reading

How God is named Being:

St. Thomas Aquinas, *In I Sent.*, 8, 1, 2; 22, 1, 1–3; *De Ente et Essentia*, Chs. IV–V; *Contra Gentiles*, III, 67 and 70; *Sum. Theol.*, I, 13, 1–12; *De Pot.*, III, 3 and 7; VII, 3.

Gilson, E., *God and Philosophy*, Ch. II; *Being and Some Philosophers*, Chs. I and IV; *L'être et l'essence*, Ch. I; *Le Thomisme*, Ch. IV; *The Spirit of Mediaeval Philosophy*, Chs. III–IV.

Maritain, J., *Distinguer pour unir, ou les degrés du savoir*, Annexe III, pp. 827–843.

Mascall, E. L., *Existence and Analogy*, Ch. VI.

Sertillanges, A. D., O.P., *Le Christianisme et les philosophies*, pp. 268–273.

Other proofs of God:

Adler, M., "The Demonstration of God's Existence," *The Thomist*, V, pp. 188–218.

---

of its operation to a natural agent, it follows that an *adequate* cause of that juncture *cannot* have its own operation joined to itself by still another cause and *sic ad infinitum.* Such an account explains nothing. Besides it is an impossible explanation. Only a cause which is identified with its operation is an *adequate* cause of all operation; such a cause is not the only cause, but it is the only *source* of all causing. Such a cause is a principal *first* cause, and principal *second* causes are instrumental only in relation to that first cause.

[8] M. J. Adler, *op. cit.*, p. 213, (1), a, b.

BERGSON, H., *Essai sur les données immédiates de la conscience*, Ch. III; *Matière et mémoire*, Ch. III; *L'évolution créatrice*, Ch. IV; *Les deux sources de la morale et de la religion*, Ch. III.

BLONDEL, M., *La pensée*, Vol. I, Pt. III, Ch. III; *L'être et les êtres.*

DESCOQS, P., S.J., *Praelectiones theologiae naturalis*, Vol. II, pp. 271–333; 375–439.

Part Two

THE NAMES OF GOD

XI · HOW GOD IS NAMED

Connection of Part Two with Part One

After the proof of God's existence there remains only the investigation of His names or nature. The proof of God's existence and the investigation of His nature are not exactly related as old to new and different knowledge. Rather, the two are related as the less well to the better known. Once God has been proved to exist as a pure act of existing, anything further to be said concerning God is merely a long commentary, as some have remarked, upon the proof. The only reason, therefore, for separating the two treatises is merely one of order: one cannot say everything about God in the same breath; yet one must have known, so to say, in one breath, the nature of God if one has seen the proof of Him. To have seen that God's nature is to exist is to see in germ whatever else can be said of Him. The purpose of the present treatise is, therefore, merely to evolve what has already been proved.

THE POSSIBILITY OF NAMING GOD

The following are the only possible answers to the question, how is God named? First, He is not named at all, because any name we might give Him is equivocal as between Him and creatures. This is the answer of agnosticism. Secondly, His names are quite the same as the names we give creatures. This is the answer of anthropomorphism. Lastly, God can be named but not always with the same names we give creatures, nor, when the names of God and creatures *are* the same, do those names signify in the same way even though they signify the same thing. The argument, which will proceed in favor of the last alternative, has been touched upon throughout Part One.[1]

NAMES COMMON TO GOD AND CREATURES ARE NAMES OF ANALOGUES

Not all names are common to God and creatures. Some names, *e.g.*, lion, animal, etc., always bear the same meaning, and precisely because they do, they cannot be used to name anything except what they do name. The underlying reason for this is that such names are names of limited beings. A lion is not a fish nor anything else but a lion. Since the nature of the thing named here is limited to being itself and nothing else, so also is the name of that nature limited to naming it and nothing else. Now, God has been proved to be an unlimited being. Hence He cannot be named, except metaphorically, by the names of limited natures. Obviously God cannot be named even metaphorically by the names of defective creatures.

Other names, however, name that which is proportioned to an act of existing. These are names of analogues, *e.g.*, the name "being" and the names of the attributes of being.[2] These are names common to God and creatures.

The Analogue

TOTAL ABSTRACTION

Knowledge is always knowledge of something. The "something" known by knowledge is always inachieved, incomplete, something beyond which there remains much more to know. It is this in-achievement or incompleteness of all our knowledge which the word "abstraction" is meant to suggest. To abstract means to pull away, to separate, from. Since the "something" we know is always pulled away or separated from much else which we do not know, thence it is that the "something" we know is always incomplete or abstracted. One has only to advert to the fact that he never knows everything even about the things he does know, in order to be sure that all his knowledge is abstracted knowledge.

---

[1] See especially pp. 155 sqq. For the history of the positions of agnosticism and anthropomorphism, see M. Chossat, S.J., "Agnosticisme," *Dictionnaire apologétique de la foi catholique*, I, coll. 25 sqq.

[2] There are other analogues transcendent within a category, but our immediate concern is not with these.

Now this characteristic of being abstracted, which attends all our knowledge, reveals a most mysterious situation: Although always incomplete or abstracted, knowledge can be abstracted for two very different reasons.

First, knowledge can be abstracted because it *leaves out* bits of information which can be later added to original information as new and different bits of information about the same thing. Thus, our knowledge of *triangle* (a three-sided plane figure) leaves out the information that a triangle is or can be *isosceles;* and when to the originally known thing, viz., *triangle*, there is added the further information of *isosceles*, that new knowledge perfects the old and is, in the added characteristic of *isosceles*, different from the old. The points to notice are these: the sheer knowledge of *triangle* does not include the knowledge of *isosceles* (on the contrary the first excludes the second), yet when *isosceles* is known, it will be a new and different knowledge about the same thing.

The relation of such abstracted knowledge to its further achievement is the relation of potency to act. The knowledge of *triangle* can develop into the knowledge of *isosceles*, and when knowledge so develops, the additions to it will achieve the preceding bits of knowledge, though never to the point of exhausting the possibility of knowing more about the same thing.

The process of separating one whole or total meaning (*triangle*) from another total, but different and more developed, meaning of the same thing (*isosceles*) is called total abstraction. Each meaning of the thing meant differs from each other, fuller or less full, meaning—triangle and isosceles are not synonyms, although all those different meanings mean the same thing.

FORMAL ABSTRACTION OF BEING

Secondly, knowledge is not always incomplete or abstracted because it leaves out information which can later be added as new and different specifications of the same thing. To move at once to the crucial case, our knowledge of "being" (of that which exists or can exist) cannot possibly leave out the specifications or different modes of being. As if those very specifications or modes of being were not also being! Consider: if, in knowing being, our knowledge left out or abstracted from the different modes of being, it would not by hypothesis be knowledge of those different modes—just as the knowledge of *triangle* is not knowledge of *isosceles*, precisely because it leaves out *isosceles*. Yet the modes of being must be the very things known by the knowledge of being if the modes alone are that which exists or can exist—and they are. It follows, if it is agreed that there *are* beings and that the beings of which there is knowledge *differ*, that knowledge of being is somehow knowledge of those differences.

This raises a crucial dilemma in two orders, in the order of knowledge and in the order of being. First, in the order of knowledge, either we know or we do not know different modes of being. If we do, how can those different modes of being be represented by what is, apparently, the same knowledge of them? If we do not, how can knowledge be said to be knowledge of being at all? Clearly, only the modes of being are being. Secondly, in the order of being, either the modes differ or they do not. If they do, how can they differ in that very aspect in which they are the same, viz., being? If they do not, why do they seem to differ? Clearly *this* being is not *that* one.[3]

Upon the suppositions of realism,[4] the only way out of the dilemma is to acknowledge that our knowledge of being is incomplete or abstracted for a very different reason from that alleged in the first instance of abstraction. In the first sort of abstracted knowledge the incompleteness of it lay in its lack: the knowledge of *triangle* lacks or leaves out the knowledge of *isosceles.* In the incomplete or abstracted knowledge of being, the incompleteness of it lies not in its lack but in its obscurity. The first sort of abstracted knowledge develops by way of adding new and different knowledge to old. The second sort of abstracted knowledge develops by way of explicating or evolving what is implicit in the old. To state the matter sharply, a man's knowledge of being is also, implicitly, knowledge of his future and, as yet, explicitly unknown wife. This must be so. Certainly, when she is explicitly known, she will not fall short of the status of "that which exists or can exist," and *that* is precisely the way she was known when her husband-to-be knew being. She must therefore have been involved somehow in his knowledge of being. The only question is, how? As the explicit is included in the implicit, the distinct in the indistinct, the sharp in the confused outline.

---

[3] This distinction between the subjective (*representans*) and the objective (*representatum*) concept will not hereafter be especially noticed, because whatever can be said of one can, proportions guarded, be said of the other.

[4] Vd. Chap. I.

If abstraction be a process of separating one total meaning from another total but different, because fuller, meaning of the same thing, the abstraction of being is not an abstraction at all. The incompleteness of our knowledge of being lies in this: it is not explicit knowledge of differences; it is implicit knowledge of them. Precisely because the explicitly known is involved, but not explicitly, in the implicitly known, thence it is that the knowledge of being is abstracted or incomplete because it is obscure. And because the obscure is in a way separated from the distinct, the name abstraction is retained, only it is called formal abstraction.

SUMMARY OF BOTH ABSTRACTIONS

To resume, knowledge by total abstraction is incomplete as leaving out differences. Knowledge by formal abstraction of being is incomplete as including all differences, but fuzzily. The end result of either abstraction is knowledge of some thing which is true of all its inferiors. Yet the knowledge of being does not signify one aspect of the known which is not another aspect. The knowledge of being signifies an aspect of the known in which there is nothing, from any other point of view whatsoever, which is not signified from that one aspect. This must be so. The knowledge of being simply must signify from an aspect in which absolutely everything is alike, viz., from the aspect of being, because everything *is* a being. Furthermore, if every being differs from every other being, the knowledge of being must also signify obscurely those differences, because differences are also being. The confusion is not the confusion of a collective idea. *Forest* signifies only an aggregate of trees. The knowledge of being signifies each and every being, indistinctly. Like a sense intuition inasmuch as it is knowledge of individual beings, the knowledge of being is unlike sense intuition inasmuch as it is knowledge also of individuals not sensed, for those too are beings. The extension of the "totally abstracted" is limited to certain inferiors; the extension of the "formally abstracted" knowledge of being is absolutely unlimited. God and creatures are under the extension of being, which is to say that, in knowing being, we know obscurely both God and creatures. The relation of the knowledge of being to the knowledge of God and of creatures is not the relation of potency to act—of what can be known to what later is known. Rather, it is the relation of act to act: the relation of what actually is known, though obscurely, to what actually is known distinctly.[5]

It remains only to emphasize how the knowledge of the analogue, being, is also obscure knowledge of the analogates. The knowledge of the analogue is always knowledge of a subject (*ens*) which involves its own act of existing (*esse*).[6] Precisely because each *ens* involves its own *esse*, the analogue, *ens habens esse*, is the reason or basis of both difference and likeness. The basis of difference, because each analogate involves its *own esse;* the basis of likeness, because *all* analogates involve their own *esse*. To put it slightly differently, the analogue is a unit accordingly as it implies a *similar* relation of *ens* to *esse* in *different* cases: just as this being involves its own *esse*, so does that being involve *its* own *esse;* yet precisely because it is its *own esse* which each *ens* involves, therefore the analogue signifies what is relatively the same in different cases. One can say that the analogue signifies that which *always* holds, viz., the involution of *esse* in *ens;* yet the analogue always signifies that which always holds, differently. In sum, because our knowledge of being is always knowledge of *ens* involving *esse*, because this involution is always present in different cases, therefore our knowledge of being is obscure knowledge of all the different cases.

---

[5] Both abstractions are present in all knowledge, but to go into that phase of the matter is not necessary for the present subject.

[6] If *ens* did not involve its own *esse*, it would not be *ens* which is or can be; nor would knowledge of *ens* be knowledge of that which is or can be.

THE ANALOGUE OF PROPER PROPORTIONALITY AND THE ANALOGUE OF ATTRIBUTION

Analogues of attribution also signify their objects analogically. "Healthy" signifies climate (a cause of health), complexion (a sign of health), George (a subject of health), a normal organism (as an intrinsic predicate of a normal organism). "Healthy" is a predicate of, or makes known, all those objects. But "healthy" signifies all those objects, except "organism," *by means of an extrinsic relation* which health bears to those objects. It is precisely *the extrinsic relation* which health bears to those objects which makes those objects known. And precisely because it is *the extrinsic relation* which health bears to those objects, it is only in terms of that relation that those objects are known. Thus, climate may be known as healthy because climate causes health. That causal relation alone, however, does not make climate known as being *itself* healthy; of itself the causal relation makes climate known only as the cause of health. And so for the other relations, except the relation of health to an organism. That all the objects named by healthy are known as being *themselves* healthy, is not known simply on the score that they are effects, causes, or signs of health. In fact, the analogates of health (except an organism) are not themselves healthy at all. Thus, the analogues of attribution do not signify all their analogates as realising in themselves the analogue; rather, they signify those analogates as being related to the analogues as causes, or effects, or signs, of the analogues.

Analogues of proper proportionality, however, do signify their analogates as *being* precisely what the analogues signify them to be. It is not *because* analogates of proper proportionality are causes or effects or signs of the analogue that they are signified by the analogue. It is rather because the analogues of proper proportionality are proportionately one that their analogates are signified. This is to say that the analogues of proper proportionality make their analogates known, not in terms of an extrinsic relation which they bear to their analogates, but in terms of an intrinsic relation of *ens* to *esse*, within the analogue itself, which relation each analogate itself realises differently. Thus, George would be a being even if, *per impossibile*, he were not caused by God, because George *is* a being. But, complexion would not be healthy unless it were caused by, or were the sign of, health. So, too, God is a being even though He might never have caused anything, whereas climate would not be healthy unless it caused health.[7]

The distinction between the analogue of attribution and of proper proportionality can also be made thus: "God is not said to be wise because He causes wisdom; rather, because He is wise, therefore does He cause wisdom."[8] First of all God can most certainly be said to be in some sense the things He causes. Hence He can be said to be wise because He causes wisdom. St. Thomas most assuredly knows this, because he often says it. Yet the point he is making here is not that effects are not in their cause, not that you may not name the cause from its effect. The point is that the causal relation of itself does not reveal what the wisdom of God is *in terms of wisdom*, anymore than does the relation of climate to health reveal what climate is in terms of health. In order to ascertain whether or not God is wise in terms of wisdom (the analogue) and not merely in terms of being the cause of wisdom, the analogy of proper proportionality must come into play. In this analogy God is wise as a wise man is wise: both God and a wise man are wise by their different wisdoms, whereas an organism and climate are not healthy by their different healths. Climate is not healthy at all in a proportionately one meaning of health, because there is no proportionately one

[7] Cf. St. Thomas Aquinas, *De Pot.*, VII, 6; *Sum. Theol.*, I, 13, 2 and 6; *Contra Gentiles*, I, 3; *De Verit.*, II, 1.

[8] St. Thomas Aquinas, *De Pot.*, VII, 6.

meaning of health. Thus, it is not alone by His causality of wisdom that God is known to be wise in terms of what wisdom is. By His causality God is known to be wise only as a cause of wisdom. What wisdom may be in God, that can be known only by an analogue (wisdom) which is related to God as the wisdom of a wise man is related to him, only differently.

In sum, the analogues of attribution make known their analogates in terms of a relation of one being to another being, the relation namely of cause, effect, or sign. This relation is extrinsic. The analogues of proper proportionality make known their analogates in themselves because of a relation of one factor of being (*ens*) to another factor (*esse*) involved in the first. This is an intrinsic relation. God is not wise, in terms of wisdom, solely because He causes wisdom. In terms solely of being the cause of wisdom God is wise as climate is healthy. But God is also wise as a wise man is wise, only differently. Wisdom makes God known in terms of wisdom itself, not merely in terms of being the cause of wisdom.

MIXED CASES OF ANALOGY

Once the formal distinction of the two analogues is grasped, it is apparent that the same analogue can be both attributive and proportional. "Being" can signify God as a cause of being (attributive analogue), and also as a being (proportional analogue). Through the analogue of attribution is made known, primarily, the existence of the analogate as a cause, or effect, or sign, of the analogue; through the analogue of proper proportion is made known, primarily, what the analogate is. Both analogues are operative in theological knowledge.

In the demonstration of God's existence an analogue of attribution is primary, viz., being as an effect or as a cause. In the investigation of God's nature the analogue of proportionality is primary, viz., being as being. It is through being as an effect that there is revealed a cause of being. It is through being as being that we learn that the cause, whose existence has been demonstrated, is also a being in terms of the analogue itself.[9]

[9] St. Thomas Aquinas, *De Pot.*, III, 4, ad 9.

RES ET MODUS

We have just seen that "being" as signifying an *ens,* which always involves an *esse,* signifies all analogates as different although proportionately one. In other words, the proportional analogue is *in* the analogates, differently. The attributive analogue, however, signifies its analogates as causes, or effects, or signs of the analogue. In other words, the attributive analogue is not, upon the score of its being attributive, *in* the analogates. Should an attributive analogue *happen* to be also a proportional analogue, it would of course be in the analogates, but not because it is attributive. For example, "healthy" is an attributive analogue, but it is not in the analogates at all, except the analogate of organism. "Being" as an effect, or cause, is also an attributive analogue, and it is also in the analogates, but not merely because the analogates are causes, or effects, or signs of the analogue. "Being" is in the analogates because causes or effects or signs of beings must in themselves be being. To know analogates through attributive analogues is to know that the analogates exist as causes, effects, or signs of the analogues. To know analogates through proportional analogues is to know what that is which exists as a cause, effect, or sign of the analogues. By the attributive analogue we know that God exists as a cause of being. By the proportional analogue we know what that *is* which exists as a cause of being: we know God as being.

Yet our proportional analogue is a weak instrument for knowing God. In fact, there is a point at which it snaps in our hands and leaves God unknown. The proportional analogue is something signified, in a certain way. The something signified is the *res,* any proportional perfection common to God and creatures. This *res,* say being, or wisdom, or goodness, etc., is truly in God: God is a being, is good, and so on. Here the instrument holds up. The way the *res* is signified, however, the *modus significandi,* that is not in God. Here the instrument breaks down.

The way the proportional analogue signifies is as a subject distinct (in concept) from its act, *e.g.,* as a subject (*ens*) of being (*esse*), or as an agent distinct from its operation, or as one who is wise but is not his wisdom. Clearly we have here two distinct factors in our knowledge: (1) a subject (2) of a qualification. Now God is not a subject of a qualification. Although He must be so conceived, nevertheless the perfections of God are not, in fact, distinct from God. The perfections of God are God, the very subject of them. The *esse* of God is God, and so is the wisdom of God. This is the fundamental reason why we cannot succeed in thinking of any one of God's attributes as being identically any other, though it is, because each perfection is identically the subject of it. We cannot do this, because our way of thinking of one attribute distinguishes that attribute from the subject of it. *A fortiori* must we distinguish any one attribute from any other. But this is a limitation upon our way of signifying, not a limitation upon the things signified.

The way the thing is signified is more proper to creatures than to God, because in them the subject is always distinct from its act. Indeed, if we speak of the *way* of signifying, *e.g.*, as an *ens* to which *esse* is related so as by being distinct (in our understanding) from the *ens*, God is not a being at all—not in that sense. If, however, we speak of the *thing* signified by a proportional analogue, that *res* is more truly God than it is anything else. Thus God is so much more a being than creatures are, that in comparison with Him they are not.[10] And so for all proportional analogues: as *res* they are preeminently God; in the way they are signified they are not properly God but creatures. That, by the way, is the reason why one may far better understand the *res* which creatures are for having understood the *res* which God is. Contrariwise, one cannot understand the *res* which God is except according to the manner one understands creatures. St. Francis Xavier remarked, "He who knows not Jesus Christ, what *does* he know"? The implication is just as true in natural theology: He who knows not the love of God, what does *he* know of love? The more firmly theological knowledge is planted on earth, the more theological it is, and the more theological it is, the more firmly is it planted on earth.

---

[10] Cf. St. Thomas Aquinas, *Sum. Theol.*, I, 13, 3 and 5; *Contra Gentiles*, I, 30; *In I Sent.*, 22, 1, 1 and 2; *De Pot.*, VII, 5.

THE WAY OF CAUSALITY, OF NEGATION, OF EMINENCE

One question remains. How is the analogue predicated of God? In three ways. First, affirmatively, God is wise, *e.g.*, because He causes wisdom. Yet, because the analogue is also one of proper proportion, and because such an analogue involves a perfection which God intrinsically is, and a manner of conceiving that perfection which God is not, therefore the analogue as conceived is predicated of God negatively. God is not wise as we must conceive wisdom, namely, as an act which is conceptually distinct from its subject. Thirdly, since the analogue is not denied of God because He falls short of realising it—on the contrary He realises it infinitely—but only because our manner of conceiving it falls short of the way it is realised in Him (in Him the subject is identically its act), therefore the analogue is true of God as being the infinite realisation of the analogue: God is super—or infinitely, wise.[11]

If one inquires how the analogue, which we must conceive in such wise as is not God, can nevertheless be predicated of Him, it would seem a sufficient answer to repeat that the *res* is predicated of God, not the *modus*. Such an answer will not of course satisfy one who does not admit the realistic background from which it issues.

That background is briefly as follows.

> The act of existing (*esse*) can mean either of two things. It may mean the act of existing, or it may mean the composition of a proposition effected by the mind in joining a predicate to a subject. Taking the act of being in the first sense, we cannot understand God's being (*esse*), or His essence; but only in the second sense. For we know that this proposition which we form about God when we say *God exists*, is true; and this we know from His effects.[12]

The second *esse*, the *esse verum* of a proposition, is related to the first *esse*, the *esse rerum*, as effect to cause. The *esse rerum* causes us to have in our knowledge an *esse verum*. The existent causes us to know: it is true that there is an existent. Thus, *God exists* is not

[11] St. Thomas Aquinas, *De Pot.*, VII, 3, ad 7.

[12] St. Thomas Aquinas, *Sum. Theol.*, I, 3, 4, ad 2; cf. *De Pot.*, VII, 2, ad 1.

purely a mental relation between an idea of God and an idea of His act of existing. *God exists* is a proposition which affirms that the act of existing, exercised as an *esse verum* (it *is true* that God exists) is exercised also as an *esse rerum:* God *does* exist. The two acts of existing, God's and our true knowledge of His existence, are proportionately one: God is to His own act of existing as God is to the act of existing which is expressed in the knowledge that it is true that He exists. The truth (*esse verum*) of the proposition *God exists*, which truth the mind signifies by the copula *is*, follows from the fact that there *is* something in nature.

QUIA EST AND *QUID EST*

When composite existents are known, we not only know that they exist, we also know to a certain extent what they are. *John exists*, and *John is a man*. Thus, we know that John exists (*quia est*) and what it is (*quid est*) which exists: John is a man. The reason why we know to a certain extent what composite existents are is, fundamentally, because our way of conceiving them is also composite. We conceive them as subjects which are distinct from their acts, and so they are. When however our knowledge is of the existent which is wholly incomposite, God, then our way of conceiving Him is not the way He is. He is wholly incomposite. This is as much as to say that we know what God is if by that you mean we know what predicates must be attributed to Him. It is not to say that we know what God is if by that you mean we know His predicates *as* identical with Him. That we do not know, because we cannot conceive as indistinct that which we must conceive as distinct. We know only that God's predicates are identical with Him. This of course is a defect in our way of knowing, not in the thing known. On the other hand, we know that God is all the predicates we must attribute to Him if by that you mean He is all those predicates, but in a way which escapes our manner of conceiving them. But if you mean that God is all His predicates as we conceive predicates, namely as acts of subjects, then we cannot know that He is those predicates. In short, we know that God exists (*quia est*) and that He is all the predicates which an unlimited act of existing implies. We do not know what the existence, or the predicates implied in the existence, of God is. We do not know what God is (*quid est*) in Himself.

Summary

Names common to God and creatures are names of analogues. An analogue signifies obscurely all its analogates: (1) Because it is a proportional unit, true of different analogates in a proportionally same manner. (2) Analogues of attribution are not of themselves true of different analogates in a proportionately same relation. If they are, that is because analogues of attribution are also analogues of proper proportion. Analogues of attribution signify analogates as causes, effects, or signs. Analogues of proper proportion signify analogates as realising in themselves, though differently, the analogous notions. By the analogues of proportion we know what (the *res*) must be said of God though we do not know the way (*modus*) these analogues are in God. In fact, the way the analogues are in God is not the way we must conceive them. Hence we affirm an analogue of God, because He causes it. We deny the same analogue of God, because, although He is its realisation, He is not its realisation as we conceive it. We affirm the same analogue of God, this time because we judge He realises it infinitely. If one inquires how we can so judge, the answer of realism is: because the *esse rerum* causes the truth, the *esse verum*, of the proposition, *God exists*. All this leaves us with the analogical knowledge that God is all His predicates (*quia est*). As to the analogical knowledge of what God is (*quid est*), it reaches only to the point of knowing what God's predicates are, not to the point of knowing those predicates *as* indistinct from Him—as they are. Strictly, we know only *that* God is and *that* He is identically His predicates (*quia est*). We do not know Him *as* identical with His predicates (*quid est*). To know Him thus would be to see Him face to face, as He is, not darkly as in the minds of creatures.

Suggested Reading

Total and formal abstraction:

Aristotle, *Post. Analy.*, I, 1; *Metaph.*, V, 6.

St. Thomas Aquinas, *In Boet. de Trin.*, V, 1; *Sum. Theol.*, I, 40, 3; I, 85, 1.

Cajetan, *In De Ente et Essentia*, Prooemium, pp. 6–7.

Maritain, J., *La philosophie de la nature*, Ch. I; *Distinguer pour unir, ou les degrés du savoir*, Annexe, II.

Simon, Y., *Prévoir et savoir*, pp. 155–172.

Analogy:

St. Thomas Aquinas, *In I Sent.*, 2, 1, 3; 4, 1, 1; 19, 5, 1–2; 22, 1, 1–3; *In Boet. de Trin.*, II, 1; VI, 3; *De Ente et Essentia*, Chs. I–II; *In Metaph.*, Prooemium; II, lect. 1; IV, lect. 1; V, lect. 8; VI, lect. 4; XI, lect. 3; *Contra Gentiles*, I, 3; I, 29–36; II, 45–46; *Sum. Theol.*, I, 12, 12–13; I, 13, 5–6; I, 16, 1; *Quodlibet.*, II, 3; *De Verit.*, I, 1; II, 1–2; II, 11; X, 11; *De Pot.*, III, 4; VII, 3–8; *Comp. Theol.*, Chs. 23–26.

Cajetan, *De Nominum Analogia*, cap. ii, nn. 19–20; cap. iii, n. 23.

Anderson, J. F., *The Bond of Being*, Chs. I, VIII, XIII, XVII, XXII.

De Raeymaeker, L., *Philosophie de l'être*, Sec. I, Ch. II.

Garrigou-Lagrange, R., O.P., *God, His Existence and His Nature*, pp. 213 sqq.

Gilson, E., *The Spirit of Mediaeval Philosophy*, Ch. IV; *Le Thomisme*, pp. 150–160.

Maritain, J., *A Preface to Metaphysics*, pp. 62 sqq.

Mascall, E. L., *Existence and Analogy*, Ch. V.

Penido, M. T.-L., *Le rôle de l'analogie en théologie dogmatique*, pp. 85–87, 96, 134 sqq.

Phelan, G. B., *St. Thomas and Analogy.*

The analogy of proportionality and the analogy of attribution:

St. Thomas Aquinas, *In I Sent.*, 22, 1, 1; *In Boet. de Trin.*, I, 2; *Contra Gentiles*, I, 3; I, 29–30; *Sum. Theol.*, I, 47, 2; I, 13, 2–6; *De Verit.*, II, 11; *De Pot.*, III, 4; VII, 5–7.

The way of causality, negation and eminence:

St. Thomas Aquinas, *In I Sent.*, 22, 1, 1–3; *In Boet. de Trin.*, I, 2; VI, 3; *Sum. Theol.*, I, 3, 4; *De Pot.*, VII, 2–5.

XII · THE FIRST NAME OF GOD: HE WHO IS

WHY GOD IS NAMED "HE WHO IS"

Everything which belongs to any being is caused from the principles of the being's nature, as risibility in man, or it comes to it through the influence of some extrinsic principle, as light in the air from the influence of the sun. But it cannot be that existence itself (*esse*) should be caused by the very form or quiddity of the thing; caused, that is, by an efficient cause, since if it were so, something would be the cause of itself, and something would bring itself into existence; but this is impossible. Therefore everything which is such that its existence is different from its nature must needs have its existence from another. And because everything which exists through another is reduced to that which exists through itself, as to its first cause, there must be something which is the cause of the existence in all things, *because it is existence only*, otherwise there would be an infinite series of causes, since everything which is not existence only would have a cause of its existence.[1]

VIA NEGATIONIS

In order to make more precise our notion of Him Who is existence only, we must successively eliminate anything incompatible with that notion.

To begin at the bottom, He Who is an act of existing only cannot be a body. Bodies are not movents unless they are moved. But God, the first movent, is not moved. Hence He is not a body. Furthermore, every body is infinitely divisible. But He Who is existence only is without any potency, and so, being without any potency to division, He cannot be a body. Lastly, from the fourth way it is clear that God cannot be less noble than a living being. Now, bodies, as bodies, do not live, else every body would be alive. On that count also God cannot be a body.

---

[1] St. Thomas Aquinas, *On Being and Essence*, Ch. IV, tr. C. Riedl (Toronto: St. Michael's College, 1934), pp. 45–46. Italics mine.

Secondly, He Who is existence only cannot be a composite of matter and form, because matter is in potency, and God has no potency.

Thirdly, He Who is existence only cannot be distinct from His essence or nature. Essence or nature is what the definition says a substance is, *e.g.*, the essence of man is rational animal. In composites of matter and form, the essence differs somewhat from the supposit or individual. Essence includes only that which falls within the definition of the species, soul and body in man for instance, not that which pertains to the individual: this soul, this body. The supposit or individual, however, includes all that which pertains to the individual. Thus, the supposit has something which the essence does not have, namely, individual characteristics. Hence, *humanity* or *rational animal* (essence, signified abstractly or concretely) and *this rational animal* are not wholly identical. In incomposites, however, the situation is different: the individuation of incomposites is not due to individual matter—that is, to *this* matter—but the forms are individualized by themselves. Here then, in incomposites, essence and supposit are identical. So for God, Who is an incomposite: He, a supposit, is not distinct from that which any description of Him states.[2]

The drift of the above point is this. You may say of a man that he is a man in virtue of his humanity, or because he is a rational animal. That is, he is a man in virtue of his essence, signified abstractly or concretely. But you may not say of *this* man either that he is humanity or that he is rational animal. This man is not humanity; he has humanity. This man is not rational animal; he is *a* rational animal. Of God, however, you must say that He is identically His essence, whether that essence be signified abstractly or concretely: God is life, God is living.

---

[2] St. Thomas Aquinas, *Sum. Theol.*, I, 3, 1–3; cf. *Contra Gentiles*, I, 21: *item, quod non est sua essentia.*

The reason why you must say that God is identically His abstract and concrete predicates is this: it is not *God* who is being conceived when you think of Him as a supposit whose definition or description does not quite cover the individual. Composite supposits, however, are being thought of correctly when they are thought of as distinct, individually, from their definition, or universal essence. But not God: here the essence of the supposit *is* the supposit. True, when we attempt to conceive God, we always fall back into our way of conceiving composites, that is, into our way of conceiving the determined and its determinant, potency and act. But this failure of ours to conceive God as indistinct from His essence witnesses only to our inability to conceive Him as He is, not to an impossibility of judging that God is or exists in a way we cannot conceive, viz., as identical with His essence. We *can* judge that God is identical with His essence. Obviously, we could not so judge unless we were first able to ascertain whether God is identical with His act of existing, because we cannot know that two factors which are distinct in concept (God and His essence) are not distinct in fact unless we first know the fact. The role of *esse* in a realist metaphysic is thus paramount. This leads to the fourth and last negation, which corners as closely as possible the meaning of Him who is existence only.

Fourthly, God is not distinct from His own act of existing. Each thing exists by its own act of existing, and so does God: *unumquodque est per suum esse.* In the case of God, however, *that which* exists is exactly *that by which* it exists, namely, an act of existing. In no other case is this so: John exists by an act of existing distinct from himself, else he would never come into existence, nor would anything else be in existence but him alone. Not so with God. He is identically an act of existing. Any *via* could prove it. For instance, God is uncaused. But He would be caused if *that which* He is were not identically *that by which* He is; because then it would not suffice for Him, in order to exist, to be that which He is; that which He is would have to be caused, whereas God is uncaused. Or this way could do it: to exist is the actuality of every form and nature.

To be actually good is to be a good thing which exists, and so on. Assume now that in the case of God, *that which* exists is *not* identical with *that by which* it exists (*esse*). Then the *esse* of God would be related to the subject of *esse* as act to potency. But God is pure act, therefore in Him that which He is is not different from that by which He is. Lastly this way could prove the point: posit God as a being. Say that in that being the subject is not its act of existing. You have said that God has, but is not, *esse*. Yet whatever has, but is not, *esse*, is a being only by participation, and God is not a being by participation, as was shown in the third negation.[3] Hence God is identically His essence and His essence is *esse*. In short, God is not only correctly judged to be identical with His essence, He is so judged *because* His essence is correctly judged to be identical with His *esse*.[4]

It will help to think of these things to fix upon certain formulae. We should not say: in God there is no subject or essence ("that which" in the expression "that which exists") of the act of existing. Rather we should say: that which God is is an act of existing, or, God's wisdom is an act of existing; and so for all His attributes. The names of creatures are properly derived from their essences, but the essence of God is properly an act of existing, and so His name is properly *esse*, He Who is. The *esse* of God devours, so to say, anything which can be said of Him.[5]

The Secondary Names or Attributes of God

THE ORDER OF DISCUSSION

From the first name of God are derived all the others. These other names describe either God's essence or His nature. Since essence is a principle of being, the attributes of essence are called entitative. Since nature is a principle of operation, the attributes of nature are called operative.

---

[3] Vd. pp. 180–181.

[4] St. Thomas Aquinas, *Sum. Theol.*, I, 3, 4, *Resp.*

[5] St. Thomas Aquinas, *In I Sent.*, 8, 1, 1, *Sol.*

ENTITATIVE ATTRIBUTES

Having denied of God any sort of composition, we have come to see that God is a pure act of existing. To this act of existing we must now attribute the following names. God is *perfect* and therefore *good; infinite* and therefore *omnipresent; immutable* and therefore *eternal;* lastly, God is *one.*

¶ *God is perfect.* To be perfect is to be completely made, *perfectum.* Since God is not made at all, He cannot be completely made nor therefore perfect in that sense. The perfection of God is not the term of change. It is the initial possession, without ever having become them, of all perfections.

To possess a perfection, say wisdom, is *to be* wise. It is by an act of *existing* that there *is* wisdom. It is because a man gains a degree of being, by becoming wise, that he gains a degree of perfection. It is not the other way about: a man does not gain a degree of being by gaining a degree of perfection. Rather, he gains a degree of perfection by gaining a degree of being. Every being is more or less perfect because it more or less *is;* it is not more or less perfect because of a grade of perfection which would be supposed to be extraneous to being. Keeping this in mind, let us now assume One Who is an act of existing only. It follows that such a One is absolute perfection, because perfection is a grade of an act of existing, whereas an act of existing only is without grade. Thus God is absolutely perfect.[6]

Our difficulty in seeing the above point arises inevitably because we are inclined to think of One Who is an act of existing only quite as we think of something which is, say, alive only. Now something which is only alive is clearly not as perfect as something which is both alive and intelligent. Just so, we are inclined to think of One Who only exists: He does not *seem* to be as perfect as something which exists and is also some other perfection of being. The illusion is caused because we lost sight of the fact that a perfection of being would not be even so much as a perfection unless it were such by

---

[6] St. Thomas Aquinas, *Contra Gentiles,* I, 28; *Sum. Theol.,* I, 4, 1, *Resp.*; I, 4, 2, ad 2.

esse, the actuality of all forms and of their very natures. As if it were not by *esse* that he who is wise is wise! As if a dead lion were better than a live jackass, or as if a dead lion were a lion at all! Then, surely, a being which is only in a given degree of perfection is more or less perfect than another being in another grade of perfection. When we think of God, however, we must not think of Him as we think of something which is only, say, alive. So to think of Him is to think of Him as we think of an essence which is distinct from its act of existing. This is fatal. To avoid the disaster we must realise that God is an act of existing whose essence is exactly that act of existing itself. God's act of existing is the perfection of *esse,* not the perfection of a grade of *esse.* He Who is only *esse* does not mean that there is something which God is not; it means that there is nothing which He is not. And the reason, once more, is because *esse,* being that by which anything is perfect, must be absolutely perfect if the *esse* in question lacks nothing pertaining to the perfection of *esse.* Such is the case of God: His *esse* lacks nothing pertaining to the perfection of *esse:* His *esse* is uncaused. There is nothing which He is not.[7]

There is nothing which God is not—but He is all perfections in His own way, that is, infinitely. Two cautions must accompany that statement. First, to say that God is all perfections in His own way is to preclude any possibility of locating in Him any mixed or limited perfection. Nevertheless there must be *that* about God which is in some way equivalent even to mixed perfections. To walk, to talk, to discourse, these are good things, but it is better to have their advantages minus their disadvantages. It would be better, for example, to be able to be where you wish without having to walk there. It is good to raise your heart to the eternal hills, or even betimes your carcass, but it is better to have been there all along. Now God has all the advantages of limited perfections without their disadvantages, inasmuch as He is their cause. Instead of *them* there is *that* in God which is infinitely better than they: His power to cause them. Thus God has virtually all mixed perfections. Secondly, even though perfections which do not of themselves imply any limitation are properly in God—more properly indeed than they are anywhere else—nevertheless we do not know what those perfections are in Him. We know only what those perfections in Him are. For instance, God is more of a person than you are; more yourself, so to say, than *you* are. As Augustine says: "Where I am most inwardly myself, You were there far more than I." [8] That, by the way, is why, when we see God face to face, we shall be more at home than we ever conceived it possible to be at home—*mansionem apud eum faciemus*. Nevertheless God is a person only according to an analogy by which His being a person is identically His act of existing, whereas your being a person is not identically your act of existing but is caused to be.[9]

---

[7] St. Thomas Aquinas, *De Ente et Essentia,* Ch. IV; ed. Roland-Gosselin, pp. 37–38; *Sum. Theol.,* I, 4, 1, ad 3; I, 4, 2.

One difficulty remains. On the one hand the names of the perfections of God are not synonyms; on the other hand they cannot name different things, else God would be composite. Apparently, then, any name of God explicitly signifies what is implicitly signified by any other name. Each name of God signifies one thing in many different ways. The mercy of God names the same thing as His justice, but in a different way.

¶ *God is good.* That God is good follows from the fact that He is perfect.[10] There is no especial difficulty in seeing that a perfect thing lacks no good. Yet there is one point to be emphasized. That point is not so much that "the good" is desirable, that the desirable is desirable inasmuch as it is perfect, that the perfect is perfect inasmuch as it is actual, that therefore the good is convertible with the actual, viz., being. The point is rather that the actual is actual and therefore good by reason of the act of existing; "for being (*esse*) is the actuality of everything, as is clear from the foregoing."[11] This indicates not only that it is one and the same thing for God to exist and to be good—that is true of anything (*in quantum sumus, boni*

---

[8] St. Augustine, *Confessions*, III, 6 (PL 32, col. 688): *intimior intimo meo.*

[9] St. Thomas Aquinas, *Sum. Theol.*, I, 4, 3, ad 3.

[10] St. Thomas Aquinas, *Contra Gentiles*, I, 37, arg. 1.

[11] St. Thomas Aquinas, *Sum. Theol.*, I, 5, 1, *Resp.* The "foregoing" is *Sum. Theol.*, I, 3, 4; I, 4, 1, ad 3. Cf. Aristotle, *Nic. Ethics*, I, 1, 1094a 3.

sumus); it also indicates that, because God is only an act of existing, we must therefore *identify* that act of existing which He is with that which we name good. We do not do this with creatures; we do not identify their goodness with themselves, because we do not identify their act of existing with themselves. True, they are and they are good insofar as they are. Nevertheless, getting their act of existing from God, they also get from Him their goodness. Creatures are good because they exist, and they exist because they are made to exist. God, however, is good because He exists, and just as His act of existing is underived, so also is His goodness. God's goodness is absolute. Creatures' goodness is relative.

¶ *God is infinite.* To be infinite is to be unbounded, unlimited. There are three ways of denying limits, and hence there are three ways of understanding the "infinite." First, matter considered as unformed is not limited to any *kind* of being, and so it is called infinite as being undetermined by form to any kind of being. This infinity is an imperfection of matter, not the infinity of God. Secondly, form which is common to the species is not limited to any *individual* of the species except by matter. Such form is called infinite because it is not limited to the individual. (When form is limited by matter, it neither gains nor loses in perfection—soul is no less soul for being *this soul;* as limited by matter, form loses only its extension and gains only contraction.) Thus the infinite may be unbounded either because it lacks form—this is the "infinite" which is attributed to matter—, or because it is not received in matter—this is the "infinite" which is attributed to form. Neither "infinite" is the infinite God. Thirdly, whereas form considered as form is not limited to any individual, and is on *that* score infinite, nevertheless the form common to a species is not common to *all* species: the soul form is common only to besouled things, not to the unbesouled. This indicates a third way of denying limits or of being infinite. The most formal of all acts is *esse*, that by which things and the very forms themselves exist. Assume now an *esse* which is limited neither to an *individual* of a species nor to any *kind* of being. Such an act would not by limited at all, that is, it would be absolutely infinite. In sum, if *esse* is not of itself limited, and if there is question of an existent which is only *esse*, that *esse* must be infinite.[12]

¶ *God is omnipresent.* Because God is identically an act of existing which causes the existence of all things from the moment they begin until they cease to be, He is present in all things, not as a part of their essence, nor as an accident, but as an agent is present to that upon which it acts. The day lasts only so long as the sun is up. Just so, creatures exist only so long as God causes them to exist. Now, no thing is more intimate or more fundamentally "present" to a thing than its *esse*. Hence, God as the cause of *esse* is in all things, and "innermostly."

In consequence of His omnipresence, God is ubiquitous: He is everywhere there is a "where." Obviously, He cannot be in place as bodies or their accidents are. Bodies fill only the spot they are in, and they exclude other bodies from that same spot. But God is in every place as giving being to the things in place.

One might add that God is sometimes present in the knowledge of knowing creatures. Certainly all creatures are present in His knowledge.[13]

Three expressions of it describe the causal presence of God in everything, As an *esse* which causes the *esse* of everything else, the *esse* of God is essentially (*per essentiam*) present to all things; "essentially," because the essence of God is His *esse* and His *esse* causes the *esse* of everything else. As an *esse* which causes the *esse* by which things are made to be beings and therefore operants, the *esse* of God is present to all things by its power (*per potentiam*); "by its power," because nothing but being is empowered to act, and God causes being. Lastly, because there would be nothing at all without God's *esse*, all things are completely bared to His knowledge, and so He is present to them by His knowledge of them (*per praesentiam*). All these descriptions of God's presence are covered by saying that God is omnipresent as an act of existing which causes everything to exist.[14]

[12] St. Thomas Aquinas, *Sum. Theol.*, I, 7, 1; cf. *Contra Gentiles*, I, 43.

[13] St. Thomas Aquinas, *Sum. Theol.*, I, 8, 1 and 2.

[14] St. Thomas Aquinas, *Sum. Theol.*, I, 8, 3. This last mode of God's presence presupposes the chapter on His knowledge. See Ch. XIII.

¶ *God is immutable.* Whatever changes passes from potency to act. But God is without potency, because He is identically His own act of existing, and so He is without change. The reason, as we saw, why the act of existing, which God is, is without potency is this: Although potency precedes act in time and in the thing which changes, nevertheless act is prior to potency in nature, because the potential is made actual only by the actual. Now the actual which is God is the first being, and the first being would not be first if It were potential or reducible to act.[15]

¶ *God is eternal.* To say that God is immutable is to say that there is no stretch in the duration of His being which is bounded either by a "before" or "after." In fact, there is not even a stretch in the duration of His being. Any "before" or "after," any interval, even, between a before or after, would imply succession or change, and God is unchangeable. We cannot of course conceive eternity. But we can correctly judge that the duration of God's act of existing is not spread out so as to have a beginning or an end or an in-between but is simultaneously total: *habens simul totum suum esse.*[16]

Sometimes things which last a very long time are called eternal, e.g., the "eternal hills." Sometimes things which never cease to exist are called eternal, *e.g.*, angels and the souls of men. Sometimes an immobile operation is called eternal, *e.g.*, eternal life or the vision of God. All these are participations in the eternity of God. In the measure in which they recede from permanence in being, in that measure these participations are not really eternal. Bodies recede from permanence in being, because their being changes. Angels and souls recede from permanence in being, because there is changeableness annexed to their operations. God alone, however, is eternal as being absolutely immutable.[17]

¶ *God is one.* Every being is either divisible or indivisible. If divisible, it is not divided; if indivisible, it cannot be divided. In either case, every being is undivided, that is, it is one. Another way to state the matter is thus: there cannot be a being unless it be an undivided or a unit being. Divide a being, and you have two beings, each of which is one. Keep on dividing and you have as many beings as there are divisions plus one; and howsoever many may be your divisions, you will always come out with unit beings—unless you are prepared to admit that there are half-beings—beings which half are and half are not. To-be and to-be-one name the same thing.

---

[15] St. Thomas Aquinas, *Sum. Theol.*, I, 9, 1; I, 3, 2, *secundo.* Cf. any of the five ways.

[16] St. Thomas Aquinas, *Contra Gentiles*, I, 15, arg. 2; *Sum. Theol.*, I, 10, 1. Cf. Boethius' definition of eternity, *De Consolatione Philosophiae*, I, prose 6 (PL 63, col. 858): the simultaneously whole and perfect possession of interminable life.

[17] St. Thomas Aquinas, *Sum. Theol.*, I, 10, 2–5.

To-be and to-be-one do not, however, name the same thing in the same way. It is not the undivided which is an existent; it is an existent which is undivided. Just so, it is not the good or the true which is an existent; it is the existent which is good and true. The attributes of being do not add anything to being; rather, they add to our notion of being. To-be, to-be-one, to-be-good, to-be-true, these do not have the same meaning; they mean the same thing in different ways.

God is undivided, because any being must be undivided. But the unity of God must be such as is compatible with a pure act of existing. Hence several varieties of unity must be excluded from His unity. He is not one as quantified beings are one. You may not, for instance, say of Him that He is one as an amount enclosed within boundaries is one. Nor can you say of Him that He is one as a piece is one, and two pieces two ones. His is not the unity of quantified being, whether the quantified being be continuous or discrete. Lastly, God is not one as an individual man or angel is one. Both a man and an angel are undivided composites: man is an undivided composite of matter plus form plus an act of existing; an angel is an undivided composite of essence plus an act of existing. But God is an undivided incomposite. A man is not the only individual of his species, although he is the only individual which *he* is. An angel *is* the only individual of his species, although he is not the only *angel* there is. God is the only God there is: He is unique.

This can be shown in many ways. To take one, only God is identically His own nature, as we saw above.[18] Such a one cannot be multiplied at all. Obviously He cannot be multiplied as an individual—no individual can. Nor can He be multiplied as are multiplied many individuals of the same species. For, in many individuals of the same species the reason why multiplication is possible is this: the individual Socrates is not identically the essence of *man.* If he were, then just as you cannot have many Socrates', so you could not have many men. But you have many men! Hence the material individual and his essence are not identical. In God, however, the individual and its essence are identical, as we saw.[19] Moreover, God cannot even be multiplied as angels are. Angels are multipliable, not because their essence is not the individual angel—it is; they are multipliable because their essence is not their act of existing. Each angel is the only individual of its kind. Nevertheless, the reason why an angel exists is not identically the same as the reason why he is an angel. Hence, if caused to exist, one angel is not the other. But this is not so with God. The reason why God exists is identically the same as the reason why He is God: He is His own act of existing. Hence God cannot be multiplied at all. He is absolutely one.

---

[18] Vd. pp. 180–181, where God is shown to be identically His own essence.

Suggested Reading

The VIA NEGATIONIS:

ST. THOMAS AQUINAS, *In I Sent.*, 8, 1, 1; 22, 1, 3; *De Ente et Essentia*, Ch. V; *Contra Gentiles*, I, 14; I, 21; I, 28; *Sum. Theol.*, I, 1, 1–4; I, 4, 1; II–II, 1, 2; *Comp. Theol.*, Ch. 2.
GILSON, E., *Le Thomisme*, pp. 140–150.
JOURNET, C., *Introduction à la théologie*, pp. 45–50.

The identity of essence and existence in God:

ST. AUGUSTINE, *De Trin.*, V, 2–3 (PL 42, coll. 912–913); VII, 5 (PL 42, coll. 912–913); *De Civ. Dei*, XI, 10 (PL 41, coll. 325–327); *De Doctr. Christ.*, I, 32 (PL 34, col. 32).
ST. THOMAS AQUINAS, *In I Sent.*, 8, 1, 1; 33, 1, 1; *De Ente et Essentia*, Chs. IV–V; *Contra Gentiles*, I, 16; I, 18; I, 21–29; I, 45; II, 6; 11, 52; *Sum. Theol.*, I, 2, 3; I, 3, 1–2; I, 3, 4; I, 4, 2; I, 9, 1; I, 13, 1; I, 13, 11; I, 28, 3; I, 54, 1; *Quodlibet.*, II, 3; *De Pot.*, VII, 2; *Comp. Theol.*, Chs. 5–41.

[19] See pp. 180–181.

Del Prado, N., O.P., *De Veritate Fundamentali Philosophiae Christianae*, Bk. III, Chs. III–V; Bk. IV, Chs. VI, VIII.

Gilson, E., *Being and Some Philosophers*, Ch. III; *Le Thomisme*, Ch. IV.

The divine attributes: God is perfect:

Plato, R*epublic*, II, 38lb; VI, 508–509; *Timaeus*, 30d.

Aristotle, *Nic. Ethics*, I, 7.

St. Augustine, *Confessions*, III, 6 (PL 32, coll. 686–687).

St. Thomas Aquinas, *In I Sent.*, 43, 1, 1; *De Ente et Essentia*, Chs. IV–V; *Contra Gentiles*, I, 28; I, 30–31; *Sum. Theol.*, I, 4, 1–3; *De Verit.*, II, 2; *Comp. Theol.*, Chs. 18–22.

Arnou, R., S.J., "Platonisme des pères," *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique*, XII, 2, coll. 2264–2266.

Chossat, M., S.J., "Dieu, sa nature selon les scolastiques," *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique*, IV, 1, coll. 1152–1243.

De Raeymaeker, L., *Philosophie de l'être*, Sec. III, Ch. III.

Garrigou-Lagrange, R., O.P., *God, His Existence and His Nature*, Vol. II, pp. 42–59.

Gilson, E., *Le Thomisme*, pp. 160–174.

Maritain, J., *Réflexions sur l'intelligence et sur sa vie propre*, Ch. VIII.

Mascall, E. L., *He Who Is*, Chs. IX–X.

God is good:

St. Thomas Aquinas, *Contra Gentiles*, I, 37–41; III, 20; *Sum Theol.*, I, 6, 1–3; *De Verit.*, XXI, 1 and 5.

God is infinite:

St. Thomas Aquinas, *In I Sent.*, 43, 1, 1; *In Lib. de Causis, lect.* 18–19; *Contra Gentiles*, I, 43; *Sum. Theol.*, I, 7, 1–2; *Quodlibet.*, III, 2; *De Pot.*, I, 2; *Comp. Theol.*, Chs. 18–22.

God is omnipresent:

St. Thomas Aquinas, *Sum. Theol.*, I, 8, 1–3.

God is immutable:

St. Thomas Aquinas, *Sum. Theol.*, I, 3, 2; I, 9, 1–2.

God is eternal:

St. Thomas Aquinas, *Contra Gentiles*, I, 15; *Sum. Theol.*, I, 10, 1–5.

God is one:

St. Thomas Aquinas, *Contra Gentiles*, I, 42; *Sum. Theol.*, I, 13, 1–4; *De Pot.*, III, 6; *Comp. Theol.*, Ch. 15.

XIII · THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD

OPERATIVE ATTRIBUTES

Having named God in consequence of what He is, it remains to name Him in consequence of what He does. The operative attributes of God name Him as an agent which either does or does not produce an effect. God would be active even though He might have made nothing. The activity of God which produces no effect is called *immanent;* His activity which produces effects is called virtually *transitive.*

The sources of God's immanent activity are His *knowledge*, His *will*, and the combination of the two is His *providence.* The providence of God may be considered in its effects: *creation* and *governance.* Special consideration must be given to God's governance of the evil actions of moral creatures.

Immanent Operation of God

WHAT KNOWLEDGE IS

A treatment, however brief, of the nature of knowledge must precede the discussion of the knowledge of God. The question is this: what makes our knowledge knowledge? The question is not this: what is our knowledge? The latter question is easily answered by giving examples of knowledge. The first question is answered only by stating the specific characteristic of knowledge, *i.e.*, by indicating what it is which makes our knowledge knowledge, no matter what is known.

To understand the answer we must keep steadily in mind the fact that there is knowledge: we feel things, and we give an intellectual account of things. For example, we feel hot things, see colored things, and we give accounts of communism, or idealism. To state the fact in other terms: by knowledge there is a difference made in the knower, a difference whose whole *raison d'être* lies in its reference to the known.

Our question, then, turns into this one: what is the nature of that relation? First let us see what, clearly, it is not. That relation is not (1) one of *physical identity* between the knower and the known. How could it be? How could the knower be identically the known and still remain himself? Nor (2) is that relation one of *physical composition* between the knower and his knowledge of the known, whether (1) the knower's quality of "knowledge of the known" be assumed to be a knowledge of *something different from the knower*, or (2) whether "knowledge of the known" be assumed to be knowledge of *something in the knower alone*. The reason for both (1) and (2) is the same. To feel, say, a hot thing does not mean that a knower is qualified by his feeling of a hot thing as a hot thing is qualified by its own heat. On that score, every hot thing should feel hot. And even if you assume that the feeling of a hot thing is not a feeling of *it* but only a feeling of one's *own* warmth, nevertheless to feel one's own warmth is not the same as to be warm. On that score, every warm thing would feel its own warmth, not to add that everyone who felt warm would have to be warm. The situation is exactly the same in intellectual knowledge. A man who knows communism is not thereby a communist, nor is his knowledge of communism the same as the physical qualifications which his knowledge of communism may have put into him, whether you assume that those physical qualifications are put into him by something, not himself, called communism, or whether you assume that he alone is the cause of those physical qualifications of his knowledge. Thus, to know a thing cannot mean either that a knower is translated physically from his status of being a knower to the status of being the known, or that he is translated from his status of being a non-knower to a status of being a knower *because of a physical change in him.* Not that there is not a physical change in him. There is. *But it is not the physical change which characterizes knowledge.* If it were, any change in nature would imply knowledge: not only would a painter know the color of a house, the house also would know its own color, and so would a flower.

These denials may enable us to see positively what, secondly, knowledge is. Knowledge, clearly, specifies a knower in terms of the known. "*Something* known," or if one prefers, "knowing *something*," makes the difference between the non-knower and the knower. Now, as we have seen, that difference cannot be merely a physical difference. We must therefore have a term which describes the situation whereby (1) the known *does* specify knowledge, but (2) not *as physical qualities specify physical subjects.* The term is *esse intentionale*, intentional being. We may now state positively what knowledge is. Knowledge is intentional being.

At this point we may perhaps feel that everything said so far amounts merely to this: knowledge is knowledge. In a way that is true. Observe, however, that to say knowledge is knowledge against the background of the denial that knowledge is nature, makes quite clear at least this much: there is a way of being, namely an intentional way of being, which is *not* the physical way of being, which all things have.

It remains to refine the notion of intentional being. Physical or natural being is that whose act is *esse*. Intentional being is that whose act is *esse intentionale*. Neither physical nor intentional *esse* is the subject of *esse*. The subject in either case is the "that which" in the expression "that which exists or is known." Now, the *esse* affects the subject of it in such wise that by the physical *esse* a physical subject thereof *exists* or can *exist;* by the intentional *esse* the subject thereof is *known* to exist or to be able to exist. Just as there is no physical being except through its physical *esse*, so there is nothing known except through its intentional *esse:* a man in nature is in nature through his physical *esse;* a man in knowledge (a man known) is in knowledge by the *esse intentionale*. Thus the content of knowledge (the knowing a *man* as opposed to the knowing of a *fish*, or the feeling of a *hot thing* as opposed to the seeing of a *colored thing*) is not the *esse intentionale*. Rather, it is by the *esse intentionale* that content is common to knowledge-content and to thing-content. To think of *esse intentionale* as if it were content either of knowledge or of a thing is to erect it into a *subject of being*. Once this is done, once *esse intentionale* is wrongly turned into a subject of being, the temptation is permanent and practically inevitable to think of it as if it were the only reality there is (Platonism), or as if beyond the content of our knowledge there is another content which our content does or does not imitate (varieties of Platonism). This to a realist is all idealistic nonsense. *Esse intentionale* is not a subject of existence. It is an act, an intentional act of existence, by which things, existing in nature by reason of their physical *esse*, exist also in knowledge by an intentional *esse*. To forget this is to think you can explain potency (the subject of *esse*) apart from its act (*esse*). As if, prior in nature to the potency of things to exist, there were not an *esse* by which they are caused to exist! As if, prior to the content of knowledge, there were not an act, *esse intentionale*, by which content has a leg in both things and knowledge! The whole function of *esse intentionale* is to give content that leg both in the realm of knowledge and in the realm of things, to render intelligible or sensible a certain subject of physical *esse*. *Esse intentionale* is a metaphysical conclusion which is necessary to explain something which is an evident datum, viz., we know things. Just so, God is a necessary conclusion from the evident datum of the existence of things.

Once the fact that we know things is admitted, it then becomes apparent why we do. We know things because the way they have of existing in knowledge is by an act of being, an *esse intentionale*, by which what is common both to knowledge and to things, common to "thingage" and to "thoughtage," common to knowledge and to the known, is known to be so common: to know is to be aware that what is in knowledge is in things. In short, grant there is knowledge and you must grant that the act of knowing and the act of being known must be one and the same act: the sensible in its act of being sensed *is* sensation, and the intelligible in its act of being understood *is* the very act of understanding.

There is another way of expressing the matter. Natural or physical qualities make a thing to be what it is and nothing else. The quality which makes one to be in "the act of knowing" makes him to be precisely that which, physically, he cannot be, viz., the thing known. It is being the other (the known) without becoming oneself other than one was—*that* characterizes knowledge: *esse aliud in quantum aliud.* True, one becomes, by knowledge, other than, different from, what one was physically, but that is only accidental though doubtless necessary to our knowledge. What is essential to our knowledge is that one in the "act of knowing" be so related to the known that his "knowing" and the "thing's being known" are one and the same act, the act of intentional being. The whole function of intentional being is to make the knower the things he knows without prejudice either to the knower's physical being or to the physical being of the known: *esse aliud in quantum aliud.*

WHAT GOD'S KNOWLEDGE IS

The *esse intentionale* or the knowledge so far described is adventitious to nature. A man is not always in the act of knowing. And even if we should suppose a knower who always *is* in the act of knowing (an angel), nevertheless if that knower's act of knowing is not identically his nature, the act of knowing is still adventitious to him, though not in time.

The matter stands differently with God. As we have seen, God, a supposit, is identically His essence because His essence is identically *esse*. Let us now assume, from the third way and from God's infinite perfection, that God knows. Put the two together: God is identically His own *esse*, and God knows. It follows that God's knowledge is *esse*, not an *esse intentionale.*

Let us unwrap the statement once more. (1) The supposit which is God is identically His essence. (Not so with creatures: the supposit which is George is not identically *man*, else there would never be any man but George.) (2) God is identically His essence because He is identically His *esse*. Any of the five ways could prove it. (3) To be *esse* alone, *i.e.*, to be an act whose whole essence is to be, *that* is to be wholly or infinitely, act. (4) Consequently, if God knows, His act of knowing must also be wholly or infinitely, act. Now, the only way in which "to know" can be wholly and infinitely act is for it to be identical with that which is wholly act, viz., pure *esse*. God's knowledge is thus His *esse*.

Put it slightly differently. If knowledge accrues to nature, it cannot be nature. This is the case of creaturely knowledge. If knowledge does *not* accrue to nature—and nothing accrues to God—*and* if God knows, then we have the sole instance where knowledge *is* nature. This is the case of divine knowledge. In Him alone are to-be and to-be-in-the-act-of-knowing identically the same. Primary in the order of being, God's *esse* in the order of operation is primarily *intelligere: ipsum eius esse est intelligere.*

The matter may be clearer by contrast. The difference between God's knowledge and anyone else's is as follows. Creaturely knowledge is an accretion of an intentional act of existing to a physical or natural act of existing, an accretion whose *raison d'être* is not exhausted in terms of a physical composition, although there is a physical composition. The finality or purpose of knowledge is to make something known. If so, the intentional accretion, as knowledge, has more to do than to color our soul or body, so to say, quite as things are colored. Intentional being has the function of being one with the thing known, the function indeed of being the thing known itself, existing intentionally. Thus, the intentional *esse has no physical subject* precisely insofar as it fulfills its function of making things known. Insofar as intentional *esse has* a physical subject, and it has, it is not knowledge; it is like any physical quality compounding with a physical subject. God's knowledge, on the other hand—since nothing at all can accrue to pure *esse*—must *be* that pure *esse*. In Him alone are to-be and to-know, nature and knowledge, identical. In Him knowledge is not an intentional *esse* but an *esse naturae*.

The common point of reference, the proportional analogue, of God's knowledge and anyone else's is this: in neither knowledge is there a physical subject with which the act of knowing, as knowing, compounds physically. At this level of metaphysics to know is *esse non per modum subjecti:*[1] to know is to be, yet not as a subject of being is. A subject of being exists so as by being itself and nothing else. A knower as knower exists so as by being, not himself, but the thing known.

Having stated the common point of reference it remains to restate the difference and resume the whole matter. Creature-knowledge is an accretion of an intentional act of existing to a natural act of existing, an accretion which does not compound as a *knowledge* accretion with any physical subject, although as a *physical* accretion it compounds with a physical subject. Divine knowledge on the other hand is not an accretion at all. Hence, divine knowledge does not compound even as a physical accretion with a physical subject. Divine knowledge is the *esse naturale* of God: *ipsum eius esse est intelligere.*

WHAT GOD KNOWS

Observe that we should never ask the question, what does God know? unless we were forced to conceive the act of knowing as distinct from its object. It is self-evident that we cannot conceive as indistinct what we must conceive as distinct: the act of knowing and the known. But this compulsion we are under of so conceiving the matter does not hinder us from judging that in a given case the two, the act of knowing and the known, are not distinct in fact if we can prove the fact. The fact is proved, as above, from the consideration that God's pure *esse* can have no accretion to it, and therefore, since God knows, His act of knowing must be also His *esse*. Now, once we have emitted that judgment there is no real reason for going on to ask, what does God know? Obviously, what God knows has already been stated in *ipsum eius esse est intelligere:* He knows Himself. We can nevertheless frame the *same* answer in terms of the different question, as follows.

---

[1] This no doubt is the reason why it is in his act of knowing that a man is most like God: it is in his act of knowing that a creature is more vastly *esse* than he ever could be by his own act of existing. His own act of existing is an act of himself and of nothing else. His act of knowing allows him to be intentionally what he cannot be physically, viz., as much as he knows. Now since knowledge, like being, is not of itself limited, *i.e.*, since knowledge as knowledge is not knowledge only of *some* things, it follows that a knowing agent can be, intentionally, all things. This seems to be the meaning of Aristotle's expression that the soul is in a way all things. On *esse non per modum subjecti* see St. Thomas Aquinas, Quodlibet., VII, 1, 4: "et . . . notitiam secundum considerationem istam [scil., secundum quod notitia comparatur ad cognoscibile] non est in anima sicut in subjecto." Vd. J. Maritain, *Distinguer pour unir, ou les degrés du savoir,* p. 220, and fn. 1.

Because God's knowledge is His *esse;* because, secondly, the only object which can leave God's act of knowing as pure as His *esse*, with which His act of knowing is identical, is *esse* itself, it follows that God knows Himself. Obviously, if there were anything in God's *esse* which is, so to say, overlooked by His act of knowing, that would argue to a defect in His knowledge which is identical with the *esse* in which there is no defect. Obviously too, if God knows things other than Himself, He cannot so know them as to have His knowledge specified by *them*. That would argue to a limitation in His knowledge, because things other than God are limited. Hence, it is in knowing Himself that He knows other things if He knows them. This leads to the next point.

GOD KNOWS EVERYTHING WHICH IS DISTINCT FROM HIMSELF

Because God's act of knowing is identically His perfection of *esse*, because, secondly, the *esse* of God is the cause of all things distinct from Himself, therefore God knows all things as in their cause, which is Himself.

One may state in detail those things which are distinct from God, and which He knows. Not that they need any cataloging insofar as this truth, *God knows them all*, is concerned. But they might seem to raise a difficulty. Indeed, upon the score that we cannot conceive the matter, they do raise a difficulty. We must however keep steadily in mind that we can successfully judge these matters, and that all our judgments are fundamentally the same: God's act of knowing is God Himself; only, that judgment can be differently framed according to the difference of the questions.

GOD KNOWS NONEXISTENTS

Some beings do not actually exist. Among them (1) some existed at one time but do not exist any more, (2) some will exist but do not exist as yet. God knows them, because He has caused them or will cause them. After the analogy of our knowledge, which sees (*videt*) what is present to it, the knowledge by which God knows such nonexistents is called the Knowledge of Vision. All these nonexistents are *present* to God's knowledge, because His knowledge is His *esse* and His *esse* is eternal. Now to *eternal* knowledge is *present* both the past and the future. (3) Some nonexistents neither have existed, nor do they exist, nor will they. These too God knows, because even though they are never to exist, God could cause them to exist, and He must know what He can do even though He never does it. Of such nonexistents God's knowledge is named the knowledge of Simple Intelligence after the analogy of our knowledge which simply understands what can exist, even though it does not exist.

GOD KNOWS FUTURE CONTINGENTS

A contingent being can either be or not-be. Considered as having its possibility of being already actuated, a contingent being is no longer *future* but *present*. So considered, viz., as *present*, a contingent being can be known with certainty by anyone who sees it. For example, Socrates can sit or not-sit. If he sits, anyone who sees him sitting can be certain that he sits. If therefore the future contingent be viewed as already actuated, there is no especial difficulty in that it be known with certainty by anyone who sees it, because as actuated the future contingent is *present*. Now, to eternal knowledge is *present* all the future contingents, which are not, could be or not-be, yet will be.

The difficulty grows, however, when we view the future contingent *before* its possibility of being is actuated, *e.g.*, when we view Socrates, who can sit or not-sit, *before* he does either. *Then* the contingent being is *future*, not present. *Then* the contingent being, viewed precisely in its own causality, or more precisely, viewed in any combination of secondary causality, cannot be known with certainty by any one: *non subditur per certitudinem alicui cognitioni.* If we go on now to assert, as we must, that God knows with certainty the future contingent event *before* it occurs, it must needs be that He knows it not in its secondary causality but in His *own* causality of that event.

Here we are faced with the following alternatives. Either God's certain knowledge of the future contingent event (before it occurs) seems to make that event necessary and not contingent; or else if the event remains contingent despite God's knowledge of it, then God's knowledge of it, seemingly, must be only conjectural knowledge. Either God's knowledge is certain, and then the event is necessary; or else the event is contingent, and then God's knowledge of it cannot be certain.

It is a marvelous lesson in intellectual honesty to see Aristotle at grips with this problem.[2] Aristotle lays it down that a contingent event, by definition, can occur or not-occur. No one can assert with certainty that it will occur; no one can assert with certainty that it will not occur. Yet *one* of two contradictories *will* occur. If so, it *must* have been true, before the occurrence, that the possibility which *will* be actuated *would be actuated.* Hence, before the event, the supposed contingent future is necessary. Yet this leads to "awkward results" and an "impossible conclusion." For then we are denying what seems most certain, viz., that there are "obvious instances" of contingent events. "It is therefore plain that it is not of necessity that everything is or takes place; but in some instances there are real alternatives," and "it cannot be said without qualification that all existence and non-existence is the outcome of necessity." Here we have a man sticking to his guns: there *are* contingent events; yet one of two contradictories *must* be. A sea fight must either take place tomorrow or not: either alternative could be; yet, of the one which will be, we must say after the event: it must have been—and we cannot say it!

There is absolutely no way out of the dilemma if we are to rely solely upon Aristotelian theology. In Aristotle's theology God is a First Movent of things which already exist: God causes things which already exist to proliferate. Similarly for God's knowledge: God's knowledge is only of that which must be. In Christian philosophy, however, God causes things to exist which, before He causes them, did not exist at all. Similarly for God's knowledge: God knows with certainty both the necessary and the contingent. For Aristotle the many *must* come from the one, by way of final causality. For Christian philosophy, the many *must* come from the one—by way of efficient and final causality—*if* they come. Christian philosophy thus allows for the existence of the necessary *and* the contingent being, because God in either case is the cause of both the necessary and the contingent.

---

[2] Aristotle, *De Interpretatione*, 18a 30–19b 4.

Let us, then, set up the problem again, this time in terms of Christian philosophy. Upon the assumption that God's *esse* and His *intelligere* are identical, upon the further assumption that His *esse* is the cause of beings, it follows that His knowledge is also the cause of beings: *scientia Dei est causa rerum.* In other words, because God knows that a contingent event, before it occurs, will occur, therefore it will occur; yet the event must remain contingent. This is the datum to be explained.[3]

Now if God knew, *first*, His own causality of a future contingent and then from His knowledge of His own causality knew, *secondly*, that the contingent future will occur, it would follow that His *knowledge* of His own causality would be the *cause* of His *knowledge* of the future contingent. In other words, God's knowledge of the future contingent would be caused by His knowledge of Himself. On that supposition two conclusions would follow: first, the supposed contingent event would be surely a necessary event, because it would be caused by God's necessary knowledge of what is necessary, viz., Himself; secondly, God's act of knowing, which is by hypothesis uncaused, would then be caused, because His uncaused act of knowing future contingents would be caused by His uncaused act of knowing Himself. But we cannot make the supposition that an uncaused knowledge-cause is caused: we cannot suppose that God's knowledge of contingent futures is caused by His knowledge of Himself. To try to make that supposition is to think that an uncaused cause, God's knowledge, causes itself. This won't do.

---

[3] There is controversy among Catholic theologians over the *particular* medium in which God knows the future contingent, but no Catholic theologian denies that the *general* medium is or can be Himself. At present we are concerned solely with the general medium of God's knowledge. For a report of the controversy on the particular medium of God's knowledge of future contingents, vd. Appendix.

We must therefore relinquish the hypothesis that God's knowledge of future contingents is *caused* by His knowledge of His own causality. In order to keep these two truths together, that is: (1) God's knowledge is the cause of contingent things; (2) His knowledge, which is the cause of things, is uncaused knowledge, we must see the matter thus: God views at a *single glance* both His own causality and the future contingent, and in that single glance He sees Himself as cause and the future contingent as caused. Thus, He knows the future contingent by the same act by which He knows Himself. If we look upon God's knowledge of Himself as knowledge of the principle, and His knowledge of the future contingent as knowledge of the conclusion, we may then say that He understands the principle *to be the cause of the conclusion.* We may not say that His knowledge of the conclusion is caused by His knowledge of the principle. He understands Himself as the cause of the contingent; His *knowledge* of the contingent is not caused by His knowledge of Himself; the *contingent* is caused by His knowledge of Himself. For God, to understand Himself is not the *cause* of His understanding His effect (for He understands the effect in the cause); nevertheless, to understand Himself is to understand His effects, since He is their cause.[4]

This understanding of the matter enables us to see at least this much: the contingent event does not turn into a necessary event upon the score that it derives, as it does, from a necessary cause, which is God's knowledge. The reason, once more, why it does not is this: it is God's knowledge of Himself as its cause which causes the event to be contingent, but His knowledge of Himself

[4] St. Thomas Aquinas, *Sum. Theol.*, I, 19, 5.

as its cause is not the cause of His knowledge that the contingent event will be. His knowledge that the contingent event will be is precisely the cause of the contingent, because His knowledge that this *will be* is identically His knowledge of Himself, and His knowledge of Himself is *esse* itself, the cause of both the necessary and the contingent.

No doubt we may feel that much more remains to be said upon the matter, and perhaps much more can be said. At any rate the central objection against God's certain knowledge of a future contingent is considerably blunted.

The central objection is this: this conditional proposition, *If God knew that this thing will be, it will be*, is a true proposition. Its posited antecedent is absolutely necessary; therefore its consequent is absolutely necessary, and so God does not know with certainty the future contingent but only the necessary.

The answer given by St. Thomas to the question is this: granting the truth of the proposition, granting the absolute necessity of the posited antecedent, we must nevertheless deny that the consequent, *it will be*, is necessary in every sense of the word "necessary." The reason for this is as follows: The necessity of the consequent, *it will be*, follows upon the necessity of the posited antecedent. Now the posited antecedent is *God knows that this will be*. That posited antecedent is absolutely necessary.[5] But the predicate "necessary" is a predicate of God's *knowledge* of the event, not a predicate of the event itself. And so, to the event itself something can be attributed, viz., the predicate "contingent," which cannot be attributed to it as it falls under God's knowledge, viz., the predicate "contingent." As it falls under God's knowledge, the event is necessary. In other words, the proposition, *whatever God knows must be* is ambiguous. It might mean this: *whatever God knows is a necessary event*. Then the proposition is false. Or it might mean this: this proposition (which expresses God's knowledge), *whatever God knows is*, is a necessary proposition. Then the proposition is true. The difference is thus between these two propositions: (1) *That is necessary, viz., the future contingent, which God knows;* (2) *It is necessary that God know the future contingent.* The first is false, the second is true.

---

[5] Not so with divine willing. The will of God has no necessary relation to any and everything He wills. Knowledge is of things as they exist in the knower, but willing is of things as they exist in themselves. Thus God necessarily knows whatever He knows, but He does not necessarily will whatever He wills. Vd. St. Thomas Aquinas, *Sum. Theol.*, I, 19, 3, ad 6.

The supposition throughout is twofold: first, there are contingent future events; secondly, God knows them with certainty *before* the event. The problem is to reconcile the two suppositions. The reconciliation may be effected only if we realise that (1) the necessity of the consequent, *this will be*, follows upon the necessity of the antecedent, *God knows this will be;* above all must we realise (2) that the antecedent, *God knows this will be*, is not this: *this will be*. It is rather this: *God knows this will be*. In other words, the necessity of the antecedent attaches to God's *knowledge* of the event, not to the event itself. Now it is surely unintelligible that certain knowledge of it should leave the future contingent event contingent, unless the knowledge in question be creative knowledge. If, however, that knowledge be creative, then we can see that such knowledge is precisely the reason why the event is contingent. Creative knowledge of the future contingent is not caused by God's knowledge of Himself. Creative knowledge of the future contingent *is* God's knowledge of Himself, and God's knowledge of Himself is His *esse*, which is the *causa rerum et contingentium et necessariorum*. The aura of unsatisfactoriness which accompanies the solution lies in this: we can no more conceive uncaused causal knowledge than we can conceive uncaused causal *esse*. But we can judge that, because there are contingent events, because all events are caused to be by God, therefore God causes contingent events to be contingent. And so for His knowledge: because He knows them to be contingent, therefore they are contingent.[6]

---

[6] A correspondent once asked: "Do you think anyone can really deny *either* that the implicate of a necessary proposition is necessary, *or* that the affirmation of the knowledge that '*x* is' implies that '*x* is'?"

I should say first: this implicate, *this will be*, of this necessary proposition, *God knows this will be*, is most certainly not necessary. The predicate "necessary" attaches to the *dictum*, viz., *God knows this will be*, not to the *res*, viz., *this will be*. In other words, it is God's *knowledge* that *this will be* which is necessary; it is not the *event* which is necessary. Now, if "necessary" is the

Suggested Reading

The operative attributes of God:

Aristotle, *Metaph.*, XII, 7.

St. Thomas Aquinas, *In II Sent.*, 1, 1, 2; *Contra Gentiles*, I, 97–98; II, 15 and 17; *Sum. Theol.*, I, 8, 1; I, 14–22; I, 44, 1; I, 45, 2–6; I, 46, 2; *De Verit.*, III, 1 and 5; *De Pot.*, III, 3 and 16.

What knowledge is:

Aristotle, *De Anima*, II, 11; *De Interpretatione*, Ch. VII.

St. Thomas Aquinas, *In I Sent.*, 19, 5, 1; *In Metaph.*, VI, lect. 4; *Contra Gentiles*, I, 53; II, 98; IV, 11; *Sum. Theol.*, I, 16, 2; I, 84–88; II–II, 173, 2; *Quodlibet.*, VII, 4; *De Verit.*, I, 1; I, 3; I, 9; I, 16; II, 2; III, 2; X, 8; XII, 3; *De Pot.*, VIII, 1; IX, 5; XI, 5; *Comp. Theol.*, Ch. 83.

De Tonquédec, J., S.J., *La critique de la connaissance*, Chs. I, IV, VI–VII, Appendix, II, VII.

Gilson, E., *Being and Some Philosophers*, Ch. VI; *L'être et l'essence*, Chs. IX–X; *Le Thomisme*, Ch. VII; *Le réalisme méthodique*, Chs. I–II, IV; *Réalisme thomiste et critique de la connaissance*, Chs. II, V, VIII; *The Spirit of Mediaeval Philosophy*, Ch. XII.

---

predicate of God's *knowledge* of the event, then the *res*, *this will be*, is conditionally necessary when the *res* is a contingent or free event, *e.g.*, Socrates necessarily sits *if* he sits. (The supposition, obviously, is that there *are* contingent or free events and that God causes them.) If, however, "necessary" were a predicate, not of God's knowledge of it, but of the event itself, then surely the event would be necessary: Socrates would not only necessarily sit if he sits, he would also sit necessarily, *i.e.*, he would sit, apart from the supposition that he does sit. But this is false of contingent events, as Aristotle recognized. Hence, one can really deny that the implicate of some necessary propositions is necessary, viz., the contingent events in the propositions expressive of God's knowledge about them.

Secondly, no one denies that the knowledge that "x is" implies that "x is." What is denied is that the divine knowledge that "x is" makes "x is" a necessary event. The fact that "x is" may be a necessary or contingent fact. In other words, one can really deny not that God's knowledge that "x is" implies that "x is," but that the divine knowledge that "x is" makes x a necessary event. Divine knowledge that "x is" makes x to be a necessary *or* contingent event, accordingly as that knowledge, which is the cause of the event, knows it as necessary, or knows it as contingent. Even our knowledge, *post factum*, of a contingent event does not turn that event into a necessary one. *Ante factum*, God's certain knowledge of a contingent event *would* turn it into a necessary one if God's knowledge were not creative. But God's knowledge is creative of the event: the event is as He knows it to be, *i.e.*, it is contingent or necessary because He knows it as contingent or necessary.

Maréchal, J., S.J., *Le point de départ de la métaphysique*, Vol. V, Bk. I, Chs. I–II; Bk. II, Sec. I–III.

Maritain, J., *The Degrees of Knowledge*, Chs. III–IV; *Réflexions sur l'intelligence et sur sa vie propre*, Chs. I–II, IX.

Simon, Y., *Introduction à l'ontologie du connaître de la connaissance*, Chs. I–III; *Prévoir et savoir*, Chs. V–VI.

What God's knowledge is:

St. Thomas Aquinas, *In I Sent.*, 35, 1–3; 36, 1, 1–2; 38, 1; 43, 1, 1; *In II Sent.*, 3, 3, 3; *In III Sent.*, 14, 2; *In Metaph.*, XII, lect. 8 and 11; *Contra Gentiles*, I, 3; I, 44–71; III, 55; *Sum. Theol.*, I, 14; I, 87, 1; *Quodlibet.*, VIII, 1; XI, 1; *De Verit.*, II, 1–5; II, 14–15; III, 2; *De Pot.*, VI, 1; *Comp. Theol.*, Chs. 28–31; 106; 132–133.

God's knowledge of future contingents:

Aristotle, *De Interpretatione*, Chs. VII–IX.

St. Thomas Aquinas, *In I Sent.*, 38, 4–5; 39, 1 and 3; *In III Sent.*, 14, 2; *Contra Gentiles*, I, 66; I, 69; *Sum. Theol.*, I, 14, 9; I, 14, 12–13; I, 19, 3 and 5; *Quodlibet.*, III, 2; XI, 1; *De Verit.*, II, 8–9; II, 12; III, 3; *De Malo*, XVI, 7; *Comp. Theol.*, Chs. 132–133.

Bañes, D., O.P., *Schol. Comment. in I*^{am} *Partem;* ed. Douai, pp. 207 sqq. For the reproduction of Bañes' text, cf. F. Stegmüller, *Neue Molinaschriften, Beiträge*, XXXII, pp. 402–405; 431–432.

Calvin, J., *Responsio ad Pighium de libero arbitrio*, in *Opera Omnia* (Amsterdam, 1671), Vol. VIII, Pt. II, pp. 116–177.

Luther, M., *De Servo Arbitrio*, in *Luther's Werke;* ed. Weimar, Vol. 18, passim, but especially pp. 635–636.

Molina, L., S.J., *Concordia liberi arbitrii cum gratiae donis, divina praescientia, providentia, et reprobatione.* For the reproduction of Molina's minor works, cf. F. Stegmüller, *Neue Molinaschriften, Beiträge*, XXXII.

Gilson, E., *Christianity and Philosophy*, Ch. II.

Mandonnet, P., "Bañez," *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique*, II, 1, col. 141.

Pegis, A. C., "Molina and Human Liberty," *Jesuit Thinkers of the Renaissance*, pp. 75–131.

Smith, G., S.J., *Freedom in Molina*, as quoted in A. C. Pegis, "Molina and Human Liberty," *Jesuit Thinkers of the Renaissance*, pp. 84, 99, 109, 114, 117.

Vansteenberghe, E., "Molina" and "Molinisme," *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique*, X, 2, coll. 2090–2092; 2094–2187.

Vignaux, P., *Luther, commentateur des Sentences.*

XIV · THE WILL OF GOD

What Will Is

THE DETERMINANTS OF OPERATION

No secondary agent is identically its own operation—a man's thinking is not a man. If it were, an agent's operation would never commence, as plainly it does. Nevertheless, though not identically its own operation, a secondary agent most assuredly "owns" its operation: thinking belongs to the thinker, sneezing to the sneezer, and so on. In short, operations issue from, are caused by, secondary agents though they are not identified with those agents.

This being so, there must be a pre-existent status of its own operation in a secondary agent which explains, first, why the agent operates rather than not, and, secondly, why it operates along certain lines of operation rather than along certain others. The pre-existent status of its operation in a secondary agent is, first, a tendency to operate according, secondly, either to the nature or knowledge of the agent. Before action begins, it is prefigured in the tendency and idea, or in the nature of the agent. Before the liver secretes bile it tends to secrete bile, because it is a liver, not a thyroid. Before a musician plays music he tends to play music, because he wishes to play the music he knows.[1]

THE DETERMINANTS OF RATIONAL OPERATION

The prefigurement of their actions in rational agents has a unique status. Rational agents can dissociate their knowledge fixation upon acting thus or so from their tendency to act thus or so; they can also dissociate their tendency to operate in the one way their knowledge suggests from operating in that one way. In other words, rational agents can pick and choose among the alternatives proposed by their knowledge, or they can scrap all alternatives and refuse to budge. The reason why they can do so is this: their knowledge fixation is not to the effect that there is only "one way out." There are many ways of skinning a cat for the knowledge which knows those ways. In fact, "one way out," in the knowledge fixation of reason, is not to skin the cat at all. Thus the plan of action which rational agents propose to themselves allows them to pick and choose among alternatives, or to reject them all. The tendency to operate which is consequent upon such knowledge is called will or rational appetite.

---

[1] Vd. pp. 90–92, 140–143.

WILL AND NATURE

Yet will has something in common with the prefigurement of natural actions in natural agents. Something in will is not only "peculiar to it as will but also peculiar to it as nature."[2] As will, appetite is in consequence of knowing some particular instance of the suitable good. As nature, will is in consequence of knowing the good as suitable. This last appetite—will as nature—is quite as necessary as the natural tendency of the liver to secrete bile, because will as nature tends to the *bonum conveniens* which is always so known that the appetite cannot fail to tend to it. Natural appetite, however, tends to a good unknown to the agent, and it tends to that good in such wise that the natural agent also cannot fail to tend to that good. The common factor in the two appetites is that neither can fail to tend to its respective good. Whence, will as nature and natural appetite are both necessary tendencies, like the tendency of pent-up steam to escape. The difference between the two is that will as nature tends to the *bonum conveniens known* as suitable, whereas natural appetite tends to its *bonum conveniens without knowing* it as suitable, although it is. God, the *instructor*

---

[2] St. Thomas Aquinas, *De Verit.*, XXII, 5; vd. *Sum. Theol.*, I, 86, 1.

naturae, knows the *bonum conveniens* of any nature, and it is His knowledge which is expressed in the tendencies of nature.[3] Insofar, then, as will as nature is fixed in its tendency to the suitable good, itself so fixed in the agent's knowledge that the agent cannot fail to tend thereto, in that far will as nature is called natural appetite. But insofar as nature does not know, in that far will as nature is not fully a natural appetite, because will is in consequence of knowledge in the agent, and natural appetite is not. There are, then, two natural appetites: the natural appetite of agents which do not know; the natural appetite of knowing agents whose knowledge is of an end so known that the appetite cannot fail to tend to that end. Similarly there are two acts of appetites which are consequent upon knowledge: the act of the "natural" appetite consequent upon the knowledge of the *bonum conveniens;* the elicited act of an appetite consequent upon the knowledge of some particular instance of the *bonum conveniens.*

THE RELATION OF WILL AS WILL TO WILL AS NATURE

The necessary ordination of will as nature to the suitable good is "the constant reserve and secret of a nature fixed upon the universal good," a secret which may "be expressed by saying that we can will ends without means, [but] we cannot will means without ends."[4]

Let us examine this secret a moment longer. Insofar as tendency or appetite is towards an end, prefigured in knowledge or nature, all appetite is always necessary—like the tendency of pent-up steam to escape. Should appetite be rational, two cases must be distinguished. First, the case where appetite is towards the known means to an end. Here appetite is only as necessary as are the means known to be necessary to the end. Secondly, we must distinguish the case where appetite is of a known end. Ends may be relative or absolute. If relative, we are back at case one, because relative ends are only analogically ends. If the end is absolute, the appetite for it is as necessary as nature itself. Not that appetite is necessary with the necessity of nature, which does not know, but it is necessary with the necessity of the absolute end which cannot fail to be prefigured in the tendency and knowledge of the agent. This fixation of the will upon a necessary end is the pivot upon which all rational activity turns, the steam in the boiler, always "up" and exercising pressure on the sides. Stuffed with its potential or necessary fixation upon its absolute end, rational appetite pursues means to that end "only insofar as it tends to the end, and what it wills in them [the means] is the end." [5]

---

[3] St. Thomas Aquinas, *Sum. Theol.*, I, 82, 1. Vd. *Sum. Theol.*, I, 19, 1; 60, 1; 79, 1; I–II, 3, 4; 30, 4; *De Pot.*, I, 3.

[4] A. C. Pegis, "Necessity and Liberty: An Historical Note on St. Thomas Aquinas," *The New Scholasticism*, XV, 1 (January, 1941), p. 43.

APPETITE IS A TRANSCENDENTAL RELATION

From all this it is clear that appetite is a transcendental relation to the good. Whether the good be prefigured in the knowledge and tendency of the agent, or prefigured only in its natural tendency, in either case to-be is *also* to be ordered-to-a-good. This transcendental ordering of appetite differs profoundly from the ordering of subjects of predicamental relations. The *esse ad* relation of father to son, or *vice versa*, vanishes when *one* of its subjects vanishes; but the remaining subject which was related does not vanish. It remains unaffected in its being, though not unaffected in its being related: it is no longer related. The terms of transcendental relations, however, both vanish unless they be related, because their being lies wholly in being related. There would *be* no wings unless they were ordered to flight; there would *be* no man unless he loved the known *bonum conveniens*. For, to-be-ordered-to-flight is to-be-wings, to-love-the-suitable-good is to-be-a-man.

THE NATURE OF THE RELATION OF APPETITE TO THE GOOD

It remains to refine our understanding of that relation. It is not because the good is known (either by the agent or by its *instructor*) that it is sought. True, unless the good were known, it would not be sought; but knowledge is not the existential source of seeking. Knowledge is rather the reason why seeking is along certain lines rather than along certain others, why we choose beefsteak instead of mutton. The cause itself of seeking, the reason for exercising the act of willing, is the appeal of the *bonum conveniens* to swing into action, an appeal to which tendency is the response. Appetite is thus a way of being which one may describe as a-way-of-being-tugged-at by the good. It is a weight, as St. Augustine says, by which we are drawn whithersoever we are drawn [6]—like the pull of gravity upon bodies.

---

[5] St. Thomas Aquinas, *Sum. Theol.*, I–II, 8, 1–3. The text is in article 2.

OPERATION ITSELF

Having described the prefigurement of their activity in rational agents—the *actus primus*, the way of being tugged at—it remains to describe the exercise of their activity, the *actus secundus*. So long as appetite is a way-of-being-tugged-at there is as yet no operation. There is simply tendency or "a-being-tugged-at." Once the tug has pulled action out of the agent, then there is operation: then the good is no longer tugging at the agent, it is in effect tugging the agent. This is the exercise of operation, the point at which the good, which was tugging away at the agent, succeeds in tugging the agent into operation, the point at which the good comes to life, so to say, in operation. This is love. Love has it analogies with knowledge. Just as the knowable object is, in the actualisation of its knowability, knowledge itself; so the lovable object (a good) is, in the actualisation of its lovability, love itself. *Actualitas appetibilis est actu appeti.*

The status in which the good exists in the loving of it has therefore two relations. First, actual willing looks to the agent as to the efficient cause of willing. Secondly, actual willing looks to the known good as (1) to a specificative, extrinsic, formal cause (exemplary cause) of willing, which cause explains why willing is of this good rather than of that one; and (2) as to a final cause of willing, which cause explains why there is willing rather than not.

[6] St. Augustine, *Confessions*, XIII, 9 (PL 32, col. 849): *pondus meum amor meus, eo feror quocumque feror.*

It is this last formality of the good, viz., the good as tugging the agent, when the agent elicits its own act, which makes love love. This it is which weights the will, makes it heavy, not with the weight of a sheer pull (with *that* weight the will is only in *actu primo*), but with the weight of an effective pull—like an object stuck fast which gives way at last and begins to yield to the pull of a rope.

In order to bring out more distinctly what it is which makes love love, we may note the following. Both the agent and the end cause operation to exist: the agent as an efficient cause of operation; the end as a final cause. As a final cause, the end (1) is a summons to act which lodges in the natural or knowledge *tendency* of the agent, and (2) when tendency or power to operate becomes operation, then that which was a summons lodges in operation as an answer to its own appeal. By efficient causality an end is made to exist. By final causality the efficient cause is (1) tugged at and (2) tugged into operation. The "being-tugged-at" is the *actus primus* of love (*voluntas*); the "being-tugged" is the *actus secundus* of love, love itself (*volitio*). In this last formality lies the very exercise of the causality of the end, and it is here that are revealed the distinctive characteristics of love.

Characteristics of Love

A FIRST CHARACTERISTIC OF LOVE

Love is said to be an act of a rational agent "moved" in consequence of his knowledge of an end. But ends do not really "move" anything. Only efficient causes move. Thus the word "move" is metaphoric, but the causality it describes is not. The causality it describes, the *actus secundus* or love itself, is appetite so circumstanced that it is following its lead, so qualified that it is bearing its burden. Here we have a causality which is not a motion. It is a fixing of tendency (of itself tendency is toward any good), an adjusting or proportioning of tendency, a weighting of tendency by a good. True, in the interval between inactivity and activity there is motion or change, viz., from inactivity to activity. But once in activity, appetite as appetite does not thereafter change: it continues unmoved in its act of loving. Of course love may cease, but before it ceases and after it has begun, in *that* interval it is without change. We may describe love, then, first as a qualification caused in appetite by a known good, by reason of which qualification appetite is united without change to that good.

A SECOND CHARACTERISTIC

Yet love does not qualify appetite as knowledge qualifies the intellect. A person may be known and not loved, or, of two equally well-known persons one may be loved, the other not. The attitude of knowledge is contemplative. Love's attitude is affective. Knowledge catches its object by whatsoever handle it may, and holds it by that handle before its gaze. Love is caught by an end, a good. There is no more in knowledge than the aspect or handle of the object which knowledge holds. But there is more in love. More, not only in the sense that love differs from knowledge, but more also in the sense that love loves more than it knows. In love the total object burdens the appetite, even though all the aspects of an object of love are not yet known. For instance, a mother loves her child, every inch of him, present and to come, even though she does not know every inch of him, present or to come. Knowledge as knowledge is not always of the actually existent, but love is; and because it is, all the unknown factors of the beloved are dragged along with the known in the unity of a totally existent good. These unknown factors are also loved, not as known, but as caught in the existential gears of what is known and loved: the unknown in the beloved is loved because of what is known. Love is an affective, not a cognitive, union.

A THIRD CHARACTERISTIC

The affective union of lover with beloved is not a physical union, though love may and doubtless should cause a physical union.

Separated friends may continue to love, though it is better for them not to be separated.

Summary

Putting it all together, we may say that love is a quality caused in the will by a good, by reason of which quality the will is united with that good by an affective union which antecedes physical and is consecutive upon cognitive union. Obviously love is not the pursuit of a good nor the joy in its possession. Love causes both the pursuit and the joy of possession, but itself is an affective union which subtends both pursuit and joy in possession. A miser pursues gold *because* he loves it; he enjoys its possession *because* he loves it. Love, however, is not the stretching of a miser's hands towards a beckoning treasure, nor is it the glow caused in him by a well-filled purse. Love is the gold in his heart.

Further to state what goes on in the act of loving is perhaps impossible. We have said that the act of loving, prefigured in the agent by tendency and knowledge, is an adjusting or proportioning of appetite to an end; that this adjustment is a quality in an agent relating him to a good—not as knowledge relates him: knowledge possesses an object; love is a possession by an end. We have also said that it is a juncture, an affective union of appetite and a good, a burdening of appetite by a good, and so on. Our dissatisfaction with such descriptions comes doubtless from the fact that we cannot catch love in its act as we catch knowledge. Love catches nothing; it is caught by something. Perhaps St. Augustine's remark should be recalled: *da amantem et sentit quod dico*, give me a lover and he knows what I am saying.

The Will of God

GOD WILLS

Because to-be is also to-be-ordered-to-a-good, and because intelligent agents are ordered, by their love thereof, to a good present to their knowledge, it follows that God, Who both is and is intelligent, also wills.[7]

WHAT GOD'S WILL IS

Because God, a supposit, is identically His own essence—since His essence is identically His *esse*, and God is *esse*—it follows that God's will is identically God, and, as identically, His *esse*.[8]

The point may be slightly expanded. Everything potential in will must be excluded from the will of God, which is pure *esse*. And so, all the paraphernalia of a pre-existent status of willing must go. This leaves God's will in the status of an operation alone: a *volitio*. Moreover, the operation of God's willing must, in order to be as actual as the *esse* with which it is identified, be a *volitio* which is identically the *volitum*.[9] That is to say, God's willing is an operation burdened with an infinite good, or better, an operation in which the good, which lives in any love of it, lives here as an infinite burden which is infinite love. True, we cannot conceive an act of willing which is identically the end willed. And we cannot conceive the matter because there is no such identity short of God. But we can judge the matter to be so, and so know that the way we must conceive willing, as distinct, namely, from the agent and the end, is not the way matters stand with God or in our judgment concerning Him. God cannot say *pondus meum amor meus*. He must say *pondus et amor ego sum*.

Thus we have it that the creaturely analogate of love is an operation, distinct from the agent yet prefigured in the agent's knowledge of and appetite for a good, an operation in which a good, which is lovable, comes to exist as the agent's love of it. The divine analogate of love is an operation, identical with the agent, in which the infinitely lovable good is identically the love of it. The analogue common to both loves is: a voluntary union of lover with beloved, an *esse volitum.* The act of loving accrues to creatures: they are not their love. The act of loving does not accrue to God: He is love. In either case love is a voluntary union of lover with beloved.

---

[7] Vd. pp. 197 sqq.; St. Thomas Aquinas, *Sum. Theol.*, I, 19, 1, *Resp.; De Verit.*, XXIII, 1, *Resp.; Contra Gentiles*, I, 72.

[8] Vd. pp. 180 sqq.; St. Thomas Aquinas, *Contra Gentiles*, I, 73; *Sum. Theol.*, I, 19, 1.

[9] Vd. St. Thomas Aquinas, *De Verit.*, XXIII, 1, ad 11. God's will is called *voluntas*, but it is, strictly, a *voluntas* in act, *i.e.*, a *volitio*.

WHAT GOD WILLS

We have seen that God's knowledge, which is identical with Himself, Who is identical with *esse,* must needs be knowledge of Himself if it is to be as actual as is His *esse;* furthermore, His knowledge of things distinct from Himself must be attributed to the fact that He knows them in Himself, Who is their cause.[10] Just so here: God's will, which is identical with Himself, Who is identical with *esse,* must needs be of Himself if His will is to be as actual as is His *esse;* and His willing of things distinct from Himself must be attributed to the fact that He wills them in willing Himself.[11] God, therefore, wills Himself, and all other things are willed in His willing of Himself.

The same point may be made thus. The adage, the good is self-diffusive, is said in the sense that an end moves.[12] Now an end moves by being loved. In created love the end has two states. There is the state in which the end antecedes the actual love of it. In this state the end resides only in the knowledge and tendency of the agent. Secondly, there is the state in which a good is actually resident in the actual love of it. In this second state the end has spread or diffused itself into the love of it.[13] From being an object which resides in a power (*voluntas*) which is consecutive upon knowledge, the good spills over into the state of being a *volitum* which resides in an act (*volitio*). In divine love, however, the good which is God must not be thought of as awakening a slumbering love of it. In God all these are the same: *volitum, volitio, esse,* the object willed (God's goodness), the willing of that object, and God's being. Hence the adage, when said of God's self-love, indicates a conceptual difference between God's goodness and His love of it, which our judicative knowledge corrects. God's goodness does not diffuse itself into His love of it as a created good diffuses itself into *our* love of it. God's goodness *is* His love of it. When said of God's love of other things besides Himself, the meaning of the adage may be got at thus. First of all there cannot be in pure act *two* love acts: one, God's self-love; the other, God's love of things. There is just one act of loving in which both God and things are embraced. Secondly, the only condition under which it is possible that God's act of loving Himself be identically His act of loving creatures is that creatures be neither means nor ends in relation to that divine act of loving. Then it would not be creatures which awaken God's love of them. Only ends or means thereto awaken love. Not being either means or ends to God's goodness, creatures leave God's love-act of them and His love-act of Himself undifferentiated. It is right here that the adage, good is self-diffusive, gets its full theological force. If God loves creatures, yet not as means or ends, there must be that about His love whereby it is of things which have absolutely no reason in themselves why they are loved. The name of such a love is infinite generosity. All love is generous; only God's love is generous to the point of arranging for the presence of a reception committee at the receiving end of an act which would be infinite love even without the committee. Here then, the adage, good is self-diffusive, describes that characteristic of love, in all cases generous, by which, in the divine instance, love is *purely* gratuitous.

---

[10] Vd. pp. 197 sqq.

[11] St. Thomas Aquinas, *Contra Gentiles,* I, 74 and 75; *Sum. Theol.,* I, 19, 1 and 2.

[12] St. Thomas Aquinas, *Sum. Theol.,* I, 5, 4, ad 2.

[13] Sometimes the end is also loved in the means, but this does not change the actual locus of the actual end, which is love; it simply drags the means into the locus of the end: the means are also loved.

The same point, namely, that God's love of Himself and all other things is one act, can also be made as follows. Consecutive upon knowledge, which is not merely of things as they are in knowledge (as, *e.g.*, when we know that we know a circle) but is also of things as they are in themselves (as, *e.g.*, when we know what a circle is), God's love is not only of things as they are in His knowledge but also of things as they are in themselves. In themselves things are existent or nonexistent.[14] It is thus that God loves them.

[14] Vd. p. 201.

He does not merely love to know them as existent or nonexistent; He loves them as they are, viz., as existent or nonexistent. Nor is this relation of God's love act to all things precisely the relation of Creator to creature. Willing is a wholly immanent act. Creation and governance are virtually transitive acts. To love all things, even nonexistents, is not precisely to make them.[15] True, a created thing differs from the noncreated, but that difference is not traceable to a difference in God's love of both the created and noncreated as if He loved the one and not the other. The difference is rather traceable to the manner in which God's love act is exercised.

HOW GOD'S LOVE IS EXERCISED

The presupposition for the exercise of God's love is that the object of His love be not a contradiction in terms, *i.e.*, be not the impossible.[16] The impossible cannot be known. Hence it cannot be willed. That being premised, it is clear first of all that God loves Himself necessarily because His will is His *esse*, and His *esse* is necessary.[17]

Other things besides God are existent or nonexistent. As to existents, God would will them quite as necessarily as He wills Himself were they means or ends to His own goodness. But they are not. Hence God's willing of them is not necessary but free. True, if God wills existents He cannot not-will them, and in that sense His willing of existents is necessary. This necessity, however, of willing things which He has willed, is purely hypothetical, *i.e.*, it is a necessity consequent upon the posited hypothesis of His willing, an hypothesis which need not have been posited, but is. Such hypothetical necessity leaves God's willing of existents free.

As to nonexistents, they are, first, things which do not actually exist, but they have existed or will exist. These nonexistents God wills with the same hypothetical necessity with which He wills the existents, *i.e.*, He wills them freely. Secondly, some nonexistents have not existed, do not exist, and will not exist. This latter class of nonexistents differs from the first in that God does not in any sense will them to exist. They may be divided into the necessary and contingent nonexistents. The necessary nonexistent is one which, were it willed by God to exist, would depend upon a necessary cause, *e.g.*, yesterday's rising of some sun other than the present one.[18] The contingent nonexistent is one which, were it willed by God to exist, would depend upon a contingent cause, *e.g.*, Socrates' choice not to take the hemlock. Now, both of these sorts of nonexistents are necessarily willed by God; not willed to exist, but willed in the sense that God wills to be able to make them exist.[19] Nor does God's necessary willing to be able to produce these necessary and contingent nonexistents turn the necessary nonexistent into the contingent, or *vice versa.* God necessarily wills to be able to produce both in the way each can be, viz., as necessary or contingent. Now, God's will to be able to produce is His very *esse*, which can produce both the necessary and contingent nonexistents. Hence the necessary and the contingent nonexistent stay in their respective classes.

---

[15] St. Thomas Aquinas, *Contra Gentiles*, I, 79.
[16] St. Thomas Aquinas, *Contra Gentiles*, I, 84.
[17] St. Thomas Aquinas, *Contra Gentiles*, I, 80.

Summary

To summarize, God wills all existents, past, present and future, with hypothetical necessity, *i.e.*, freely. God wills some nonexistents (those, namely, which He does not at all will to exist) with absolute necessity, because His willing of them is a willing to be able to produce them, and such willing is God Himself.

The difficulty against the above doctrine is this: the necessary and free will-act of God are identically the same will-act, and that looks to be impossible. It is a difficulty of the same kind as that raised by identifying God's knowledge of Himself and His knowledge of creatures. If things known by God (God and creatures) are different, the knowledge of them ought to differ also. Just so here, if the things willed by God differ (God and creatures), the willing of them ought to differ as well.

---

[18] Tomorrow's rising of some other sun than the present one would serve equally well as an example of a necessary nonexistent if only we were certain that another sun would *not* rise tomorrow. But we are not absolutely certain of that. The same holds for the next example in the text.

[19] St. Thomas Aquinas, *De Verit.*, III, 6, *Resp.*, et ad 3 and ad 4; III, 3; II, 8.

The difficulty assumes that things cause God's knowledge and will, and it is that very assumption which must be denied.

> . . . since the will follows from the intellect, the cause explaining the willing of one who wills is the same as the cause explaining the knowing of one who knows. The case with the intellect is this: that if the principle and its conclusion are understood separately from each other, the understanding of the principle is the cause that the conclusion is known. But if the intellect perceive the conclusion in the principle itself, apprehending both the one and the other at the same glance, in this case the knowledge of the conclusion would not be caused by understanding the principles, since a thing cannot be its own cause; and yet, it would be true that the intellect would understand the principles to be the cause of the conclusion. It is the same with the will, with respect to which the end stands in the same relation to the means as principles to the conclusions in the intellect.
>
> Hence, if anyone in one act wills an end, and in another act the means to that end, his willing the end will be the cause of his willing the means. This cannot be the case if in one act he wills both end and means; for a thing cannot be its own cause. Yet it will be true to say that he wills to order to the end the means to the end. Now as God by one act understands all things in His essence, so by one act He wills all things in His goodness. Hence, as in God to understand the cause is not the cause of His understanding the effect (for He understands the effect in the cause), so, in Him, to will an end is not the cause of His willing the means; yet He wills the ordering of the means to the end. Therefore He wills this to be as means to that; but He does not will this because of that.[20]

Once the assumption has been denied, the difficulty persists in the measure that we cannot understand the *esse* of God.

Suggested Reading

The will as rational appetite:

Aristotle, *Nic. Ethics*, VI, 5; VI, 13; VII, 8; X, 7.

St. Thomas Aquinas, *In II Sent.*, 24, 1, 1–3; 25, 2; *In Periherm.*, I, lect.

[20] St. Thomas Aquinas, *Sum. Theol.*, I, 19, 5, *Resp.*

14; *Contra Gentiles*, II, 47; III, 26; *Sum. Theol.*, I, 19, 1; I, 59, 4; I, 60, 1; I, 82, 1–5; I, 83, 4; I, 86, 1; I–II, 9, 1; I–II, 13, 1 and 6; I–II, 8, 1 and 3; I–II, 10, 1 and 2; *De Verit.*, XV, 3; XXII, 1–6; XXIV, 1–6; XXV, 1; *De Pot.*, I, 3; *De Malo*, III, 3; VI, 1.

Gilson, E., *Le Thomisme*, Ch. VIII.

Pegis, A. C., "Necessity and Liberty: An Historical Note on St. Thomas Aquinas," *The New Scholasticism*, XV, 1, pp. 18–45.

Smith, G., S.J., "Intelligence and Liberty," *The New Scholasticism*, XV, 1, pp. 1–17.

On the will of God:

St. Thomas Aquinas, *In I Sent.*, 39, 1, 1; 41, 3; 43, 2, 1; 45, 1–3; 46, 1; 47, 2–3; *In II Sent.*, 25, 1; *In Periherm.*, I, lect. 14; *In Metaph.*, I, lect. 3; VI, lect. 3; *Contra Gentiles*, I, 37; I, 72; I, 84, I, 87–88; II, 23; II, 30; III, 91; III, 96–98; IV, 19; *Sum. Theol.*, I, 19; *Quodlibet.*, XI, 1; XII, 1; *De Verit.*, II, 8; III, 3 and 6; VI, 2; XXIII, 1–8; XXIV, 3; *De Pot.*, III, 17; I, 5; III, 15; *De Malo*, XVI, 5.

On God's love:

St. Thomas Aquinas, *In II Sent.*, 26, 1; *In III Sent.*, 32, 1–2; 22, 4; *In De Div. Nom.*, IV, lect. 9; *Contra Gentiles*, I, 80; I, 84; I, 91; IV, 19; III, 150; *Sum. Theol.*, I, 20; *De Verit.*, XXVII, 1.

Gilson, E., *The Spirit of Mediaeval Philosophy*, Ch. XIV.

Pegis, A. C., "Principale Volitum: Some Notes on a Supposed Thomistic Contradiction," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, IX, 1, pp. 51–70. For the discussion on this article, cf. *ibid.*, pp. 71–97; IX, 2, pp. 284–293.

XV · THE VIRTUALLY TRANSITIVE ACTION OF GOD

THE NOTION OF CREATION

We are inevitably inclined to think of creatures, ourselves say, as set over against God pretty much as one person is set over against his neighbor. We go on to add a second illusion to the first: since our neighbor over there, so we think, created us, His creative action is something which happened to us, something which caused us, the candidates for existence, to exist, pretty much as the action of an electorate causes a candidate for office to be elected. Then we add one last stroke to an already false picture, and our illusion is complete. Just as we imagine creation as something which happened to us, so we think of God's subsequent action in our regard: that subsequent action of His is also something which happens to our actions. The complete picture, completely false, is thus the picture of a hero crowned with the garland of creation and given an arm to aid him off the rostrum.

All the above is sub-philosophic fancy though doubtless psychologically inescapable. Creation is not something which happened to us. On the contrary, it is we who have happened, we who have happened to be created. Nor is the divine action which is subsequent to God's creation like a boost given to one who is struggling hard on his own. We are not, by creation, let into a race; nor, once in the race, does "God pick 'em up" whereas "we put 'em down."

We and everything in us are God's. If creation be a gift, it is not a gift made to us; we are the gift. If God causes us to act, He does not do so by way of "moving in," by way of pulling strings; He so causes us to act that we do the job. Our being, that little *pied-à-terre* which we call ourselves, is truly ourselves and so is its activity ours. But nothing we are or do so belongs to the realm of *esse* as to have an independent claim thereon. We are ourselves and so is our activity ours, but neither we nor our actions belong wholly to ourselves. *Non nostri sumus.*[1]

To express the matter technically, our situation in regard to God is that we are His creation; not the act of creation by which God makes us to exist (that act is God's); rather we are the effect of the creative act of God. This effect is "the beginning of existing (*essendi*), and a relation to the Creator from Whom the creature receives being." [2] That manner of expressing the situation may help to exclude the fanciful supposition that before creation there is something to be created. So also may the following expressions help: God creates from nothing, or, creation is a passage from non-being to being. "Nothing" and "non-being" are not stuff out of which God makes something to be. To create from nothing means only this: to make, but not to make from something else. Steel, *e.g.*, we make from iron ore. We do not create steel. A thing is created which, before it existed, did not exist at all.[3]

As was said, we are helpless in exorcising the illusion that before we existed we were candidates for existence. We can no more conceive the creative act than we can conceive the divine *esse*, with which the creative act is identified. When we make something we always have something to start with, something to go on, some capital to manipulate, and it is precisely this starting in our making which is lacking in God's making. Hence we are prone to conclude either that God had something to start with, or that, failing something to start with, creation is impossible. Our sophism is apparent. We should conclude: either creation does not presuppose material,[4] or, if it does, there is no creation.

---

[1] Cf. H. de Lubac, S.J., *Surnaturel*, pp. 485 sqq.

[2] St. Thomas Aquinas, *De Pot.*, III, 3, *Resp. ad fin.; Sum. Theol.*, I, 44, 1, *Resp.*

[3] St. Thomas Aquinas, *Sum. Theol.*, I, 45, 1, ad 3; *De Pot.*, III, 1, ad 7. The steel which we make from ore is as truly created by God as was the ore. His causality always produces being, even the being which has some of its antecedents in second causes. *A fortiori*, His causality produces the being which has no antecedents in second causes—if there be such being. Cf. pp. 109 sqq.

PROOF OF CREATION

Let us endeavor to establish the first member of our disjunction: creation presupposes no material. We must keep in mind, however, that what forces us to accept that first member is not our success in representing the matter. We cannot represent the matter. We must assert the proposition *God creates from nothing*, not for reasons which compel *its* necessity, but rather for reasons which compel *us* to assert it. Were we compelled to assert the proposition because we saw *its* necessity, instead of the necessity of our asserting it, we should have proved too much; we should have proved that God must create. Recall that when we prove poison from death we show, not that poison upon any hypothesis must have caused death; rather we prove that poison in a given situation must have caused death. So here, we show, not that God in any hypothesis must have created; we show that God in the event that there are creatures must have created them. As Aristotle remarks, the reason why we *know* planets are near, viz., because they do not twinkle, is not necessarily the reason why they *are* near. Just so, the reason we know God created, viz., because there are effects, is not necessarily the reason why He created. We don't know why God created, else we should be seeing God. We know only that God created.

A brief reflection on any one of the five ways can convince us that all things are made by God to be. For instance, a changing thing is a thing-existing-as-changing. Now, there must be a cause of a thing-existing-as-changing. Furthermore, no cause of a thing-existing-as-changing can presuppose the act of existing which it causes (and the act of existing of a thing-existing-as-changing *is* caused). Now, to cause an act of existing is to create. So for the other ways: to cause an act-of-existing-as-causing is to create, to cause an act-of-existing-as-contingent is to create, etc.[5]

---

[4] As an effect of God, creation is a relation by which created *esse* depends upon pure *esse*. The subject of the created *esse* is a creature, which is prior to the relation as subject is prior to accident. The subject of created *esse* is not prior in time to its relation to God (St. Thomas Aquinas, *Sum. Theol.*, I, 45, 2, *Resp.;* I, 45, 3, ad 3). We must, of course, think of God's creative act as related to a creature, but this thought relation is purely logical, not real (*De Pot.*, III, 3, *Resp.*). Only the relation of creature to Creator is real, and that relation is this: the creature in its dependence upon God from Whom it receives being.

GOD ALONE CREATES

One who sees that God creates sees also that God alone creates. To be a cause of an act of existing is to be identified with one's own act of existing. For, if a cause of existing were not identical with its own act of existing, such a cause would have its own act of existing caused, and so it would not be a cause of existing. (It is self-evident that a cause of existing cannot cause its own existing.) Now, to be identical with the act of existing is to be unique. For, two beings, each identical with its own act of existing, would telescope into one, or, if they didn't, one of them would not be identical with its act of existing. Thus there is only one Creator.[6]

Even a "delegated creator" presupposes its own act of existing, and so a delegated creator is a contradiction in terms. Unable to exist of themselves, creatures cannot act except in virtue of an act of existing which they have received. God, however, acts in virtue of an unreceived *esse*, and so His creative action is paralleled by His *esse:* both His *esse* and its action are unique, because His *esse* is unique, and His operation is His *esse.*[7]

THE ESPECIAL DIFFICULTY AGAINST CREATION

Thus far the notion of creation has yielded this much: before its existence a creature exists not at all; that it exists is due solely to the creative action of God.

We may get at the special difficulty involved in the notion of

[5] Vd. pp. 109 sqq., 123 sqq., 125, 130 sqq., 144 sqq.

[6] Vd. p. 114.

[7] St. Thomas Aquinas, *Sum. Theol.*, I, 8, 1, *Resp.;* I, 45, 5, *Resp.; Contra Gentiles*, II, 21.

creation by eliminating first of all a difficulty which is common to the understanding of all efficient causality. First of all, before there is steel there is ore. Steel is made from ore. Nor is this all. Not only does ore precede steel. The maker of steel also precedes the steel which he makes. Here we have a potential factor (ore) and an actual factor (steel-maker) which enable us to explain the surplusage of act (steel) over potency (ore), because there is an act (steel-maker) which is that surplusage, and which by its causal action puts the surplusage, which it is, into the ore which is not but can be steel. There is no insuperable difficulty in understanding this. We draw an intelligible line from the potential (ore) to the actual (steel) by means of the actual (steel-maker), and thus succeed in making change intelligible. In creation, however, there is no existent subject like ore to receive its act of existing. This absence of an existent subject which might be supposed to receive the act of creation makes it necessary for our understanding of creation to put the *whole* burden of explaining the existence of that subject upon pure *esse*. We do not do this in order to explain change and generation. In the making of steel the burden of explanation is borne by both the cause (steel-maker) and the pre-existent subject (ore). In creation, however, the burden of explanation is borne wholly by the cause, pure act. The only difficulty here is the same as that which we encounter in any explanation by efficient causality, viz., it is due to the cause that there is the effect. We surmount this difficulty, as we do in the matter of generation and change, simply by acknowledging that an effect is due to the cause; only, in this case, we note that the cause has more to account for, viz., the subject of creation as well as its act (*esse*). There is no especial difficulty in all this except the psychological one of trying to imagine a subject before its existence. The best way to avoid such a difficulty is simply to stop trying to imagine such a subject—like one who quits butting his head against a wall.

The especial difficulty in creation is this: An efficient cause must not only account for the production of an effect, it must also account for the effect being of the sort it is, and it does so because the cause is like the effect. Now, the cause of *esse* cannot be like created *esse*, else created *esse* would be uncreated *esse*, a contradiction in terms! This is what makes the notion of creation peculiarly refractory to thorough understanding.

In order to come to some understanding of the matter, observe first that the likeness of an effect to its cause may be natural: cherries come from a cherry tree. The likeness may also be as between an artifact and the artist's plan: Hamlet was in Shakespeare's mind before he was in print. Effects pre-exist in their causes either by nature or by knowledge. Now, as we have seen, the effect which is a creature cannot pre-exist naturally in the Creator, else there would be two pure "*esse*'s"—a contradiction in terms! The creature must therefore pre-exist in the Creator's knowledge. To say that, however, lands us into the extraordinary difficulties peculiar to creation.

Consider: let creatures exist in their Creator's knowledge. That knowledge cannot be increased or diminished whether it be to the effect that creatures exist, or to the effect that they do not. The reason is apparent: God's *esse* is not increased when creatures exist, nor is it diminished when they do not, and God's knowledge is His *esse*. Thus, although refusing to make creatures like God in nature, we seem to run into difficulty by making them like His knowledge of them. If creatures are like God's knowledge of them, there ought to be a difference between a divine knowledge which is stuffed with the item that Plato exists, and a divine knowledge unstuffed, so to say, with the same item. Yet in divine knowledge too there can be no difference, because God's knowledge is His *esse*, and there is not any difference in God's *esse* whether Plato exists or not.

ATTEMPTED SOLUTIONS OF THE DIFFICULTY

The attempts to meet the difficulty can only be the following. First, say boldly that the *esse* of creatures is similar in nature to the *esse* of God—as one oak tree is like another. This attempt reduces creation to generation, free production to necessary production, and turns the proof of God's existence into some sort of vision of God. As an answer to the difficulty posed above, this attempt maintains that if Plato's existence is in God's knowledge, it is so located there that Plato's nonexistence could not have been known by God, because Plato's existence is necessary. The first attempt, as is clear, is scarcely successful if one is to preserve the freedom of God's creative act and the corresponding freedom of His practical knowledge.

Second attempt: say that creatures are created by God in the sense that, although they cannot exist of themselves, nevertheless God must cause them to exist. Notice the expression "God must cause them to exist." It means, not that if creatures exist they must be caused; rather it means this: apart from any hypothesis of their existence God cannot help causing them to exist. Cause them God must. One will recognize in this attempt the Arabs' *necesse esse per se* (God) and the *necesse esse per aliud* (creatures). As an answer to the difficulty concerning God's knowledge of an existent, this attempt maintains pretty much the same position of the first attempt: God's knowledge of an existent is necessary knowledge. True, this second attempt preserves some notion of creation. After all, it acknowledges that God causes creatures to be, but it changes the notion of an absolutely free production into a spontaneous one. God's will here is an acquiescence to the existence of creatures—like the acquiescence of a man who always agreed with his wife because he always let her have her way. Moreover, this second attempt changes the middle term of the proof of God's existence, viz., existents, into essence: God is bound, though cheerfully, to will into existence sometime whatever essence stares Him in the face.

Third attempt: say that God wills creatures to exist with an absolutely free act; say that no essence or divine knowledge thereof has anything to do with God's creative will. In short, locate the pre-existent status of creatures solely in the will of God. This attempt destroys Divine Wisdom, which is at least a plan according to which God creates. Moreover, by not acknowledging a pre-existent plan for creatures in the mind of God, this attempt also destroys *our* wisdom. We are left staring at alternatives of activity, quite as unable as is the Divine Will when it stares at essences, to know what is coming next until we will it. True, this third attempt preserves the notion of creation somewhat better than did the second attempt: it acknowledges the absolute freedom of God's creative act. But it empties God's choice to create of all knowledge except speculative knowledge. No divine knowledge of creatures except speculative precedes the Divine Will.

Fourth and last attempt: locate creaturely *esse* in divine *esse* according to an analogy, and, since God's *esse* is also His knowledge, locate creaturely *esse* also in the divine *intelligere;* then make a unit of God's knowledge and will, and try to see in that unit, which is practical knowledge, a creative essence which may render a not wholly unintelligible account of the relation of creatures to Creator.

The first attempt is out-and-out naturalism. The second attempt is non-Christian or Neoplatonism. The third attempt is Christian Platonism. The fourth attempt is a Christian version of the matter proposed by St. Thomas Aquinas.

We must carefully examine the precise issue in St. Thomas' version. The question is this: Assuming that creatures, before their creation, do not reside naturally in God, their cause, like cherries in a cherry tree; assuming, secondly, that creatures before their creation do not reside in God as its spontaneous acts reside in an agent, *e.g.*, knee-jerks in the organism (non-Christian or Neoplatonism); nor, thirdly, as in a will-act unguided by knowledge (Christian Platonism); how do creatures, before they exist, so reside in God's knowledge that His knowledge of them may be one immutable act whether that knowledge have been to the effect that creatures exist or to the effect that they do not exist? (The assumption is that creatures could possibly not exist at all, and so God's knowledge could have been of either alternative without prejudice to the immutability of His knowledge.) How, in other words, can there be no difference in the divine knowledge whether it have known Plato as existent or nonexistent?

As was remarked, the question is similar to this one: how can there be no difference in God whether He create Plato or not? Similar, but not quite the same. An existent Plato can conceivably differ from God, because Plato is there, by his analogous and created *esse*, to differ from God. But before Plato is there, there is only God, and Plato is nothing except in God's knowledge. Now *that* is enough to stump an angel. Is God's knowledge of Plato God? Then it certainly is not Plato. Is God's knowledge of Plato Plato? Then Plato is certainly not *ex nihilo*.

HISTORICAL CLARIFICATION

The difficulty has a long history.[8] Only the relevant points in that history can be touched upon, and these often only indirectly. The relevant points are those which exhibit the relation of created objects to divine knowledge, which is both free and necessary. In Chapter XIII the emphasis was rather on the relations of the various objects themselves to divine knowledge. Here emphasis is put on the divine knowledge itself. These historical points are often only indirectly relevant because they are involved in other subject matters, as where, *e.g.*, one may learn that Socrates had a wife only because one has learned that she once "conked" him.

¶ *Socrates and Plato.* Our question is this: how do creatures so reside in God's knowledge that God's knowledge remains the same whether it be of one alternative or its opposite? [9] Sophisticated as we are used to consider ourselves, we cannot face this problem without facing the problem of universals. Like scientists who talk indulgently of "phlogiston," "ether," etc., yet must face the issue which these entities were meant to solve, or else remain laboratory assistants, so must we face "universals," or else remain pseudo-philosophers.

---

[8] For the pages to follow in the text, one may consult the following authors: J. Paulus, *Henri de Gand. Essai sur les tendances de sa métaphysique, Études de Philosophie Médiévale*, XXV (Paris: J. Vrin, 1938), pp. 259 sqq.; A.-M. Goichon, *La philosophie d'Avicenne* (Paris: Adrien-Maisonneuve, 1944); E. Gilson, *La philosophie au moyen âge* (Paris: Payot, 1944), Chs. VI–VIII. Only Avicenna's *Metaphysices Compendium;* ed. Nematallah Carame (Romae: Pont. Institut. Orientalium Studiorum, 1926), is easily available. Avicenna's *Opera* (Venetiis, 1508), is difficult to secure except in photostat. See also A. C. Pegis, "The Dilemma of Being and Unity," *Essays in Thomism* (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1942), pp. 151–183; E. Gilson, *L'être et l'essence* (Paris: J. Vrin, 1948), pp. 121 sqq.; *Being and Some Philosophers* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1949), pp. 212 sqq.; *Le Thomisme* (Paris: J. Vrin, 1947), pp. 174 sqq.

[9] God's knowledge, obviously, is not of the same object in such a case, but it is identical knowledge all the same.

When Socrates had drawn attention to the concept, it was inevitable that the following question should arise: How may we reconcile the characteristics of the concept with the characteristics of the things about which presumably we have concepts? Concepts are abstract, universal, necessary. Things are concrete, singular, contingent. If our concepts have those above-named characteristics, how can they be about things which do *not* have these characteristics? And if our conceptual knowledge is not about things, what is it about?

Plato said, according to Aristotle,[10] that it is about abstract, universal, necessary things. We must then ask Plato, where are these things? They are, according to Plato, not in the world of experience at all. They are in a world by themselves, the world of Ideas. Thus, to the question, What is science about? Plato's fundamental answer is this: Science is about Ideas, not about things. The reason which forced Plato to this answer is apparent: he thought that the only way we can preserve the certainty of science is to endow the objects of scientific knowledge with the same characteristics which scientific knowledge has, and to say that our certain knowledge is about *those* objects, not about things. Clearly, according to Plato, the objects of certain or scientific knowledge must have an existence separate from the existence of the things we experience, because the objects of certain knowledge must hold steady, and things do not hold steady.

¶ *Aristotle.* Aristotle thought that the things we know are *not* separate from the things which exist and which we experience.[11] True, Aristotle also admitted that our scientific knowledge is abstract, universal, necessary. But so also, he thought, are things. What things? we must now ask Aristotle. God, celestial bodies, and matter, he answers.[12]

---

[10] For Aristotle on Plato, see *Metaph.*, I, 6, 987a 29; 987b 1; I, 9, 991a 8; 991a 20; 991b 4; VII, 8, 1033b 26; XII, 4, 1078b 15; 1078b 35; 1079a 9–13; XIII, 5, 1079b 12; XIII, 9, 1086b 6.

[11] Aristotle, *Metaph.*, I, 9, 991b 1; V, 1, 1013a 18; V, 2, 1013a 24; VII, 13, 1038b 9; VII, 16, 1040b 27; XII, 9, 1074b 34; *De Anima*, III, 8, 432a 9; *Phys.*, II, 3, 194b 24; II, 7, 198b 4; VIII, 6, 258b 10; *Post. Analy.*, I, 11, 77a 5; *De Part. Animal.*, I, 1, 639b 11.

But God and celestial bodies do not have all the characteristics which our knowledge has, and besides, they are not the only objects of which we have certain knowledge. Necessary though God, celestial bodies, and matter may be, nevertheless they are singular, whereas our knowledge is universal. And at any rate certain science is often about contingent things. True, Aristotle will admit, but all the same it is things, not ideas, which we know with certainty.

Aristotle is here doing two things. First, he is admitting the primacy of the abstract, necessary, and universal in the order of knowledge. Next, he is admitting in the order of being the primacy of the concrete, the contingent, the singular. He is refusing, in other words, to exile into a Platonic world the objects of our knowledge. Let these objects stay where they are, viz., in the world of things, he is saying. Some secret tie must bind knowledge to existent things.

No question about it, Aristotle is right: there must be a connection between things and our knowledge of them. Nevertheless, though Aristotle may be right in his facts, his account of the grounds for these facts is lacking something. Inevitably, then, someone will try to supply the grounds for the fact of the connection between scientific knowledge and things. So, we must now see the hole in Aristotle's position, and how philosophers tried to fill it.

The difficulty in Aristotle's position is not in getting individuals to "universalize." Since there is no *de jure* difference between one man and another in respect to their both being men, we may as well say, as indeed we do: Peter is a man, Paul is a man, etc.

The difficulty lies rather in getting universals to "individualize." If Socrates is a man for exactly the same reasons for which he is Socrates, then it follows that just as you cannot have many Socrates', so you could not have many men—but you *do* have many men! Aristotle saw the point involved there, none better. He knew there was a gap between the universal and the individual in which it is found. And the way in which he tried to bridge that gap was fundamentally correct. He bridged the gap by putting upon matter and a cause of the change of matter the burden of individualizing the universal. His solution, however, won't quite solve the problem. For, even if we assume that a universal is individualized by matter and a cause of change in matter, nevertheless the same objection recurs, this time in the order of being.

---

[12] Aristotle, *Metaph.*, XII, 2, 1069b 35; XII, 8, 1073a 24; *Phys.*, I, 9, 192a 28; VIII, 6, 259a 7; *De Caelo*, I, 3, 270a 13. Cf. St. Thomas Aquinas, *Sum. Theol.*, I, 46, 1, obj. 3; *In II Sent.*, 1, 1, 5.

If Socrates *exists* for exactly the same reason for which he is Socrates, an individual, then it follows that just as you cannot have many Socrates', so you could not have many existents—but you *do* have many existents! Put the objection slightly differently. If to exist is to be identically Socrates, then Socrates could not get out of existence, nor could Plato get into existence—yet both opposites are true. Socrates dies and Plato is born. The hole in Aristotle's position, then, is not in his failure to see the need of a material subject and a cause of change in that subject in order that the universal may individualize. The hole in Aristotle's position is here: he failed to see the need of a subject and a cause of *existence*, in order that an individual may *exist*.

The reason for Aristotle's failure to see that need is apparent. For him, to be an individual or first substance is quite the same as to be or to exist. For him, even though there must be a cause of first substance, nevertheless the cause of first substance causes precisely and only first substance. The cause of first substance does not cause first substance to exist, because the Aristotelian first substance exists by definition. Now, Aristotle would be wholly right if first substances or individuals existed by definition; if, that is, first substances were contingent in all but their existence, and if their existence were necessary. He thought they were so contingent. But if first substances are contingent in their very existence, there is a hole in Aristotle's position, and it is this: the Aristotelian world is contingent only in its variations, contingent in the spot where existents change, one into another; contingent with a contingency as between this thing before, and this thing after, its change. His world has no contingency as between this thing and nothing at all, as between this world and no world at all. Aristotle never conceived that his world could possibly not-be at all. Lacking such a notion, he saw no need of a cause of the world's existence. He saw only the need of a cause in the variation of things whose existence is guaranteed for all time. Aristotle lacked, in short, the notion of created being.

Now, by as much as it is true that the world is created, by so much is it true that Aristotle did not fully answer the problem of universals.

¶ *Christianity.* Christians were told by the Old and New Testaments that God causes everything to exist. It then became possible for them by stuffing the algebra of Aristotle's formulae with new content to see why the proposition *God creates the world* must be true. For, if the very act of existing, by which all the things we experience exist, is such that all those things could be or not-be, then there must be a cause not only of change but also of the very act of existing by which all things exist. The only premises necessary to validate the proposition *God creates the world* are these: there *is* a world; it *is* contingent, or caused to be, in its existence.

With their notion of creation Christians felt they could answer the problem raised by universals. Consider: the problem raised by universals is to get from them to things. (To get from things to universals by abstraction presents no insuperable difficulty.) With Plato, Christians saw the gap between universals and things. Christians, however, could not leave that gap gaping as Plato did, or if one prefers, Christians could not with Plato suppress the gap by suppressing one of its termini. With Aristotle's attempt to bridge the gap Christians went along up to this point: Christians agreed with Aristotle that the gap was to be bridged in the order of knowledge by abstraction, and by matter and a cause of change in the order of substantial being. There they stopped, because Aristotle's being was substance. Now substance, Christians thought, was only a way of being, according to which, if a thing exists, it will have a single act of existing. Thus Christians thought that substance was the terminus of a trajectory from universals to a way of being, but not to being itself, not to the actual act of existing. From universals to substance the trajectory is made by a cause of substance. In this

Aristotle was deemed to be right. But from substance to *esse*, the trajectory can be made only by a cause of *esse*, *i.e.*, by a Creator.

"Ganging up," so to say, with Aristotle in order to eliminate Plato's world of Ideas, Christians alone would also eliminate the Aristotelian world of necessary being, and for it substitute a created one. Christians would deny any *de jure* line from universals to things. Nothing in universals, whether they be universals of essence or "universals" of being, nothing in universals demands the actual existence of their objects. If the things in which universals are found exist, that is due to a Creator of things. As to the manner of coming to know there is a Creator, Christians accepted the mechanism of Aristotelian proof; only, the Christian proof now discerns in the First Mover a Creator, One Who is quite up to the job of getting first substances on their feet.

For the life of him Aristotle cannot make his first substances a going concern, not at least if their act of existing be contingent. True, if the Aristotelian contingent being is contingent in all but its existence, then the Aristotelian world is so much of a going concern that it never began to be nor could it ever stop. Such a world, so Christians thought, eliminates the freedom of God's creative act and by the same token, viz., by making creation necessary, eliminates a Creator.

In sum, for Platonic Ideas and an Aristotelian world Christianity substituted creative ideas and a created world.

¶ *Neoplatonism.* But Platonism (the Ideas) did not go under the Christian yoke quite stripped of its arms. Porphyry got the problem off to a bad start. He left his successors wishing to know whether genera and species existed, as Plato thought, or whether they were only in the mind, as no one had thought.[13] This disjunction of Porphyry's, if accepted, boxes a man in. As if Porphyry's were the only alternatives! True, if Porphyry's *are* the only alternatives, the answers to his question can only be two. Universals exist: this is the answer of "realists." Or the answer must be this: universals are only in the mind. This is the answer of the "anti-realists." The first alternative could not maintain itself. All the evidence is against the existence of genera and species. The second alternative has maintained itself to this day, but with notable variations.

---

[13] Porphyrii *Isagoge*, ed. A. Busse; *Commentaria in Aristotelem graeca*, edita consilio . . . Academiae . . . Borussicae, Vol. IV (1), pp. 1 (Greek text) and 25 (Latin text); Berlin, 1887: "mox de generibus ac speciebus illud quidem sive subsistunt sive in solis nudisque intellectibus posita sunt, sive subsistentia corporalia sunt an incorporalia, et utrum separata a sensibilibus an in sensibilibus posita et circa ea constantia, dicere recusabo. . . ."

¶ *Avicenna.*[14] The next thoroughly philosophical contribution to the problem is Avicenna's. Avicenna noted that there are two factors in a universal: its universality (the extension of the concept), and its content (the comprehension of the concept). The content of the universal, Avicenna points out, does not exclude or include universality or singularity. Universality is the condition of knowledge, singularity the condition of nature. Conceptual content neither includes nor excludes either condition of nature or knowledge. Thus, the definition of "horse" can be known without there being in that definition either the status of singularity (when "horse" exists) or of universality (when "horse" is defined). Like Eohippus, the parade horse of evolution, Avicenna's "horse" was to have an equally famous parade all the way from Platonism to nominalism.

Indifferent to the status of singularity or of universality, *equinitas* is a block of intelligible being which, under Avicenna's baton, now marches in solitary splendor outside any known ranks of being. The known ranks of being are *esse rationis* and *esse naturale*. Yet *equinitas* is not an *esse rationis*, because it is not necessary that *equinitas* be *known* in order for *equinitas* to be *equinitas*. Nor is *equinitas* an *esse naturale*, because it is not necessary for *equinitas* to *exist* in order that it may be *equinitas*. Now, knowledge is the support of an *esse rationis*, and the act of existing is the heart of the *esse naturale*. Indifferent to either knowledge or existence, *equinitas* is *de jure* on its own. By what right if not by the *esse rationis* or *naturae?* According to Avicenna, by the right of an *esse essentiae*. Here we have a Platonic idea *rediviva:* an *esse* which is separate from the *esse naturae* and the *esse rationis*.

---

[14] Avicenna, *Metaph.*, V, 1, fol. 86v; *Log.*, I, fol. 2r; III, fol. 12r, in *Opera* (Venetiis, 1508), photostat.

Let us examine more closely this *esse essentiae*. Although nothing, according to Avicenna, exists save in nature or knowledge, nevertheless within the concept of *equinitas* there is a content to which universality is added when we know *equinitas*, and to which singularity is added when *equinitas* exists. *Equinitas* is thus prior to the two added states of universality and singularity: prior in knowledge precisely because universality and singularity [15] are objects of knowledge which presuppose the knowledge of the *esse essentiae*, it is also prior in metaphysics, because onto *equinitas* is clapped the *esse naturae*, which is an accident.

Let us now set Avicenna's *esse essentiae* in the context of our problem: what is the relation, in the dimension of knowledge, of creature to Creator? If one is concerned, as Avicenna was, to preserve some notion of creation, one must maintain that the *esse essentiae* gets only its *esse naturae* or act of existing from God. But before the *esse essentiae* is given its act of existing, it is set stubbornly over against the vision of God. The difficulty is: how did the *esse essentiae* get there? In two phases Avicenna thinks: first, God knows Himself as imitable in all possible ways; second, the possible ways in which God can be imitated are consequent upon God's self-knowledge. Hence creatures are related to Creator thus: their existence is due to His will, which is spontaneously impelled to create them; their *esse essentiae* is due to God's intellect by which they are projected into an intelligible order *after* they have left God's self-knowledge, and *before* His will puts them into existence. If we conceive God's self-knowledge as the divine ideas, the *esse essentiae* is the ideate of these ideas, an ideate which is *itself* a divine idea although it is not identified with the idea which is God's self-knowledge. In sum, creatures pre-exist not only in the divine self-knowledge but also as blocks of intelligible being, objects constructed by God in the intelligible order, and set over against God and known by Him. In God's will creatures exist pretty much as a knee-jerk pre-exists in the structure of the knee. Avicennian essences dangle between God's self-knowledge and the world of things.[16]

---

[15] Avicennisers admit that knowledge starts with sensation. But this "start" is not a causal one. Sensation is merely the occasion of knowledge. Thus there may be a psychological priority of sensation over intellection, but not a noetic priority.

¶ *Christian solutions.* No Christian theologian could accept Avicenna's version of creation without qualification. What is chiefly unassimilable in Avicenna is the necessity with which God creates. Hence theologians tried to eliminate necessity from God's creative act.

To assert God's freedom to create is easy. The difficulty lies in asserting two things at the same time: God's freedom to create and an *esse essentiae.* If there be an *esse essentiae* set over against God's knowledge before He creates, it follows that to create means to give an act of existing to that *esse essentiae.* This being so, God's creative causality is reduced to His will-act, freely willing into existence the *esse essentiae.* Now this sort of freedom in God's will-act to create empties God's causality of all wisdom. Consider: we ought to be able to say that God has reasons for creation, even though we don't know what those reasons are. Yet we may say no such thing if the only assignable cause for creation is the will of God. It is true, in a sense, that God's will is the only reason for anything at all; but not in the sense that there is no knowledge back of God's decision to create. Now, back of God's decision to create an *esse essentiae*, according to Avicenna, there is only speculative knowledge (of the *esse essentiae*), not practical knowledge. Obviously Avicenna's account of the matter will not hold if only practical knowledge is a reason for producing anything.

Besides changing the notion of a free act from a decision to act which is based upon some reason to a decision to act for no reason at all, the presence of the *esse essentiae* before God's contemplative gaze does other things as well. The *esse essentiae* divides *esse* from essence so as to make or to tend to make of *esse* an accident. Then, in order to avoid the erection of *esse* into an accident, one will have to identify *esse* with essence.

Such are the difficulties one encounters by allowing that an *esse essentiae* emanates from God's knowledge. By making these *esse es-*

---

[16] Avicenna, *Metaphysices Compendium;* ed. N. Carame, Lib. I, Pars 2, Tr. IV, Chs. 1–2, pp. 118–121; Tr. V, Ch. 1, pp. 126–127.

sentiae doubles of creatures, one posits a link between God and creatures, a link which has the chief characteristic of a missing link: it is missing. Dangling before the vision of God as separate both from Him and creatures, *esse essentiae* moves from its own state to the state of *esse naturae* for no reason beyond God's will. Such a divine will-act, whether one calls it free with Neoplatonic Christians or necessitated with Avicenna, has slipped all control of practical reason. Without the control of practical reason it is small wonder that Avicenna's Eohippus marches all the way to nominalism. What, after all, is nominalism if not a denial of God's wisdom and its discernible outlines in His artifacts?

The *esse essentiae* is an appeasement offered to Greek philosophy. Like all appeasements it must eventually end in complete surrender. Let *esse essentiae* be advanced to meet the shock of Greek necessitarianism: *equinitas* is not necessary per se; but *per aliud* it is necessary (thus Avicenna). Very well then, even though not necessary per se, *esse essentiae* is still necessary *per aliud*, and so something creaturely is necessary after all. Thus the Greeks through Avicenna. Not so, Christian Neoplatonists reply; *esse essentiae* is not even necessary *per aliud*. But, a Greek can well reply, even though not necessary *per aliud*, nevertheless the *esse essentiae* is necessary as essence, and I ask no more than that. Something which is not God is necessary, even on Christian Neoplatonic premises, and that is all that Greek philosophy ever demanded.

¶ *St. Thomas Aquinas.* The only way to escape surrender to Greek necessitarianism is to eliminate the villain of the piece, the *esse essentiae*. This is precisely what St. Thomas Aquinas did. Absolute essence, St. Thomas explains, exists *only* in knowledge. That is, the only *esse* which absolute essence has is an *esse cognitum*, the status of being known. True, absolute essence does not have to exist in knowledge in order to be defined as it is defined; nor does it have to exist in nature in order to be defined as it is defined. Six (the number) is six whether one knows it or not, or whether six things exist or not. Nevertheless the indifference which the number six has to being in nature or knowledge, the indifference, *i.e.*, by which six is six whether it be known or not, or whether it be existent or not, is a *known* indifference. Apart from that status of being *known* to be indifferent to nature or knowledge, there *is* no absolute essence which is indifferent to nature or knowledge. By whom is absolute essence known to be indifferent to nature or knowledge? By us if we care to know the matter. It is also known by God. In sum, there is no *esse* of sheer essence except an *esse cognitum*, in our knowledge or God's.[17] There is nothing which either we or God peer at and see, set over against us outside our knowledge, as an *esse essentiae*.

The villain of the piece is now eliminated. We must next see whether the play may successfully proceed. God creates freely, because He creates according to His knowledge (only intellectual knowledge can see alternatives, and only where there are alternatives can there be freedom). God creates according to His knowledge, because (1) there is finality in the universe, (2) because, lacking knowledge, God would have to produce His like, as an apple tree, which does not know, produces apples. But two infinites are impossible. Hence God cannot produce as nature produces, viz., in only one way, but as an artisan produces, viz., in the way which allows the artifact to be the analogue of the artisan's knowledge. (3) God creates according to His knowledge, because all effects pre-exist in their cause in the way in which the cause exists. Now God's being in the dimension of His activity is knowledge—*ipsum eius esse est intelligere*.[18] Effects therefore pre-exist in God's knowledge.

The stage is now set for the crucial act. All the actors are now ready except the *esse essentiae* and its partner in crime, the delegate creator. These two have bowed out. The only character left, which must reduce plurality to unity, is divine knowledge or the divine ideas.

Let us see precisely what role the divine ideas must play in order to reduce plurality to unity. Granted that creatures are freely produced by God and not, as the Arabs thought, necessarily; granted that creatures pre-exist in God's knowledge and not, as Christian Platonists think, solely in God's will; how are we to describe the divine knowledge, in which there is no difference whether that divine knowledge know Plato as existent or nonexistent? For this is the role which divine ideas must play, viz., the role of reducing Plato and the absence of Plato to a single knowledge-act in which there is no difference whether Plato were known by that knowledge-act to be existent or to be nonexistent.[19] Can this role be played at all?

---

[17] Vd. pp. 43–44. St. Thomas Aquinas, *Quodlibet*, VIII, 1.

[18] Vd. pp. 140 sqq., and Chapter XV. St. Thomas Aquinas, *Sum. Theol.*, I, 7, 2, *Resp.;* I, 19, 4, *Resp.; De Pot.*, III, 10, *Resp.*

Certainly not, if Plato and the absence of Plato are located (1) outside of God in creatures, or (2) outside of God in two *esse essentiae*. A world with and a world without Plato! What a tremendous difference is here. What a tremendous difference even in the *thought* of such a situation. *This* plurality cannot be reduced to unity, not if such plurality be in creatures, not even if one moves this plurality from creatures into a divine knowledge of two *esse essentiae*. Plato and minus Plato are obstinately two. Two also, and just as obstinately, are Plato and minus Plato in two *esse essentiae* which are set over against God for Him to stare at withal.

In order to preserve the unity of divine knowledge and the plurality of Its objects, we must arrest, as we have done, any emanation of these objects from God, any emanation, *i.e.*, which would locate these objects outside of God before they get into the state of existing. We must deny that there are any "ideates" of God's ideas. We must snip off any bulging of Plato or minus Plato beyond the orbit of God's knowledge. We must see, in short, that the plurality of God's ideas is not a plurality of different knowledges, not even a plurality of different objects constituted by God's knowledge and set over against God's knowledge midway between Him and existent creatures. The plurality of God's knowledge is a plurality of a single knowledge act which is not immediately of plurality, but rather of the *principle* of plurality, the divine *esse* Itself, known as imitable.

---

[19] God could not know Plato to be existent if Plato were nonexistent; nor could He know Plato to be nonexistent if Plato were existent. Nevertheless, since Plato, before he existed could have existed or not, and since God knows all things immutably, it must needs be that God's knowledge remains the same whichever alternative be known, viz., Plato or nonexistent Plato.

We may also see the matter in the following way. An idea is a form separated from matter.[20] God's ideas are His knowledge of His own essence as being variously imitable by creatures. (God's knowledge of His own essence as essence is not a divine idea.) Thus, divine ideas are not the different ways in which God's essence is imitable. Such ways would be the old *esse essentiae redivivum*, the sell-out to Greek necessitarianism, a sell-out which can't successfully mitigate the completeness of the surrender no matter how sophisticated may be the resources which Henry of Ghent or Duns Scotus, etc., call upon. No, the situation is *not* this: God knows Himself as variously imitable and then, corresponding to His self-knowledge, there loom upon His horizon the various different ways in which He is imitable. The situation is rather this: God knows Himself as variously imitable and this self-knowledge *is* the divine ideas. Nothing further looms upon His horizon. Thus, the plurality of divine ideas is not a plurality of different ideates to which correspond different contours in the divine intellect. The plurality of divine ideas is one idea of God's essence as imitable, which essence (known as imitable) is the principle of plurality and the equivalent of many ideas. In itself the divine idea is not many ideas. Rather, many ideas find in the one divine idea the very principle of their plurality. And so, God knows the many by knowing them in the One, Himself. So to know the many, viz., in *this* One, is precisely to know the many. For *this* One is the cause of plurality both in being and in knowledge.[21]

We are now able to state the mystery of the divine knowledge of plurality: ". . . ideas [divine] are said to be many inasmuch as many models are understood through *the self-same essence*." [22]

---

[20] St. Thomas Aquinas, *De Verit.*, III, 1. A form of material bodies is not of itself immaterial, as Plato thought. Form gets its immateriality or separateness from matter only by reason of its existence in a mind—ours or God's.

[21] Since we do not cause being, our knowledge has only the loose unity of analogical knowledge. God however calls each creature by its name.

[22] St. Thomas Aquinas, *Sum. Theol.*, I, 15, 2, ad 1. Cf. I, 15, 2, ad 2: God by *one principle* understands many things.

The breakdown of God's self-knowledge may now be made. (1) God's knowledge of His essence as essence is God, not a divine idea. (2) God's knowledge of His essence as diversely imitable by creatures is the divine idea. (3) God's essence, known as diversely imitable by creatures, is the principle of plurality. Hence, according as to that essence different creatures bear different relations, some imitating It in this way some in that way, the divine idea is knowledge of each creature in the single knowledge God has of His diversely imitable essence. To put it in another way: God's single idea of His diversely imitable essence is equivalent to many ideas, and in this sense God's ideas are many. The plurality of divine ideas is not a plurality by which God's idea of *animal* is not His idea of *man*, or by which His idea of Plato could not be His idea of minus Plato. Rather, it is a plurality by which both the idea of *animal* and *man*, or Plato and minus Plato, are reduced to a single idea of God's essence which is a known imitability by both *animal* and *man*, Plato and minus Plato. Not the idea of an essence of a creature, not the different ways in which divine essence is imitable, the divine idea is the divine essence known as that to which Its participations bear different relations. (4) These different relations may be classified as follows. (a) God's essence, known by Him to be imitable by necessary truths, *e.g.*, two and two is four, is God's speculative knowledge: *i.e.*, whatever God knows must exist in a certain way if it is to exist at all. Speculative also is God's knowledge of things which were not, are not, and will not be: *i.e.*, whatever God knows can, but will not, exist. These things God knows in knowing that He is able to will them. Hence His knowledge of them may be called virtually practical, although it is not practical as is His knowledge of whatever will be.[23] (b) God's essence, known by Him to be imitated by a contingent existent, whether that existent actually exists, did, or will exist, is actually practical. He knows the existent which is, was, or which is to be, because He knows that He wills it to exist.[24]

---

[23] St. Thomas Aquinas, *Sum. Theol.*, I, 15, 3, *Resp.* It may be noted that the only existential status which such necessary truths have is God's intellect itself. Vd. pp. 43 sqq.

[24] Vd. pp. 201 sqq.

Summary

We have attempted to understand in some way the demonstrated proposition that God creates the world from nothing. Since we came to the notion of creation through the notion of beings whose act of existing needs to be caused, we met, midway between creatures and Creator, the divine ideas. Divine ideas, indeed, are the only condition under which it is possible that God produce something *distinct* from Himself which before it existed did not exist at all. For, the principle of the pre-existence of every effect in its cause demands that *such* an effect (a creature) pre-exist in *such* a cause (God) only according to knowledge. Certainly, such an effect cannot pre-exist according to nature, else it would not be from nothing. Thus, divine ideas are the ideal conditions under which creatures may pre-exist in God, their cause.

Now this is extraordinarily mysterious. If creatures pre-exist in the knowledge of God, and if God's knowledge *is* God (*ipsum eius esse est intelligere*), it would seem either that there in God's knowledge they are *not* known as distinct from Him; or if they *are* known there as distinct from Him, then these distinctly-known-creatures antecede what supposedly came from nothing, viz., existent creatures.

The tortuousness of the difficulty is apparent from the attempted solutions. Some of these solutions can be immediately rejected. Creatures cannot pre-exist in God as apples pre-exist in an apple tree. Were creatures so to exist in God, creation turns into generation, and by the same token God creates necessarily, and so our proof of God turns into some sort of vision of God. Nor can creatures pre-exist only in the will of God. To locate them solely there is to strip God of practical knowledge and by the same token to debase wisdom to the lowly status of having nothing to say for herself—not only God's wisdom but ours as well. The next and most sophisticated of the unsuccessful attempts to solve the problem is that of Christian Neoplatonism. This solution defines the divine idea as the essence of a creature known by God. Standing midway between the out-and-out necessitarianism of the Arabs, for whom God's will consecrates the existence of those essences (known by God), and the divine freedom of St. Thomas Aquinas, for whom God creates freely according to His wisdom, the Christian Neoplatonic solution leaves no place in creation for a practical wisdom of God, approves an emanation of creaturely essence from God, and thus divides the essence from the existence of creatures. All these are unacceptable consequents flowing consequentially from the premise of an *esse essentiae.*

St. Thomas Aquinas eliminated the premise and with it the consequents. There is no *esse essentiae.* An effect pre-exists in the knowledge which God has of His own essence as variously imitable. This knowledge as an act is one, not many: it is God. This knowledge as implying content is the knowledge of the One principle of plurality, and so it is knowledge of plurality.

So we come to a sort of answer to our dilemma: if creatures pre-exist in God's knowledge, and if God's knowledge is His *esse,* then either they are not known as distinct from God, precisely because they are the same as His *esse,* which is identical with His *intelligere;* or, if they are known as distinct from God, then they antecede what supposedly came from nothing. The answer would seem to be as follows. Creatures pre-existing in God's knowledge are known as distinct precisely because the *esse* of God is *variously* imitable and He knows it. On the other hand, the distinctly known creatures have no *esse* in God which is not His *intelligere;* they have no *esse* of their own. Thus, if one says creatures in God's knowledge are either God or not-God (the first alternative swamping the distinction between God and creatures, the second destroying the pre-existence of the effect in the cause), the answer would seem to be: creatures as the divinely known *principle* of plurality are God; creatures as the known plurality of that same known principle of plurality are not God, because they are not known as God. Thus the known principle of plurality is at once one and, equivalently, many.

The difficulty, as always, persists inasmuch as we do not know this divine principle of plurality.

Suggested Reading

On creation: The Divine Ideas:

St. Thomas Aquinas, *In I Sent.*, 36, 2, 1–3; *In II Sent.*, 1, 1, 2; *In Phys.*, VIII, lect. 2; *In Metaph.*, I, lect. 15; *In De Div. Nom.*, V, lect. 3; *Contra Gentiles*, I, 54; II, 15–21; *Sum. Theol.*, I, 7, 2; I, 8, 1; I, 15, 1–3; I, 19, 4 and 8; I, 44, 1 and 3; I, 45, 1–5; *Quodlibet.*, IV, 1; VIII, 1; *De Verit.*, III, 1–7; V, 9; *De Pot.*, III, 1, 3, 5, 10, 17; *De Sub. Sep.*, Ch. VII; *Comp. Theol.*, Ch. 68.

Avicenna, *Avicennae Metaphysices Compendium*, pp. 91–111.

On creation: historical background:

De Vaux, R., *Notes et textes sur l'Avicennisme latin aux confins des XII et XIII^{e} siècles*, Ch. I.

Forest, A., *La structure métaphysique du concret selon Saint Thomas d'Aquin*, Ch. III.

Gilson, E., *The Spirit of Mediaeval Philosophy*, Chs. III–IV; *Being and Some Philosophers*, pp. 212 sqq; *L'être et l'essence*, Chs. I–V; *La philosophie au moyen âge*, Chs. VI–VIII; *Le Thomisme*, pp. 174 sqq; "Les sources gréco-arabes de l'Augustinisme Avicennisant," *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du moyen âge*, IV, pp. 5–149.

Goichon, A.-M., *La distinction de l'essence et de l'existence d'après Ibn Sina; La philosophie d'Avicenne.*

Jolivet, R., *Essai sur les rapports entre la pensée grecque et la pensée chrétienne*, pp. 54 sqq.

Paulus, J., *Henri de Gand. Essai sur les tendances de sa métaphysique*, Chs. II and V.

Pegis, A. C., "The Dilemma of Being and Unity," *Essays in Thomism*, pp. 151–183.

Penido, M.T.-L., *Le rôle de l'analogie en théologie dogmatique*, Ch. II.

Roland-Gosselin, M.-D., O.P., *Le "De Ente et Essentia" de S. Thomas d'Aquin*, pp. 51–66; 137–200.

Sertillanges, A. D., O.P., "L'idée de création dans saint Thomas d'Aquin," *Revue de théologie et de philosophie* (April, 1907).

Smith, G., S.J., "Avicenna and the Possibles," *The New Scholasticism*, XVII, 4, pp. 340–357.

St. Thomas' criticism of Avicennian necessity:

St. Thomas Aquinas, *In I Sent.*, 6, 2; 43, 2, 1; *Contra Gentiles*, I, 81; II, 23; III, 97; *Sum. Theol.*, I, 13, 1–8; I, 15, 2; *De Verit.*, XXIII, 4–5; *De Pot.*, I, 2 and 5; II, 3; III, 4, 7, 8, 14–18; V, 1, 4, 10; VII, 7; IX, 9.

Zedler, B., "St. Thomas and Avicenna in the 'De Potentia Dei,'" *Traditio*, VI (1948), pp. 105–159.

XVI · THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD

The Notion of Providence

One is provident who fittingly orders to the end of life those who are subject to him.[1] Such a one has a plan according to which his subjects will act so as to attain their end; and such a one executes that plan. These two, the plan and its execution, pertain to providence. The execution of the plan is called governance, the plan itself is providence.

That God both provides and governs follows from the fact that He creates. In creative knowledge everything created is accounted for: the existence of things, their movement towards their end, their attainment of their appointed end.

PROVIDENCE IS PRACTICAL KNOWLEDGE

Several comments are in order. First, God's plan or providence is not an anticipatory peek into the future, like the astronomer's anticipatory knowledge of an eclipse. God does not know future goings-on because they will be, as a scientist does. Rather future goings-on will be what they will be because God knows they will be. Being creative, God's knowledge anticipates the future as an artist's idea anticipates his artifact. His knowledge is practical.

In practical knowledge there are two factors: specification, caused by the intellect, which accounts for what it is that will be made (a plane? a tractor?); a will-act, which accounts for the fact that specifications are got on their feet, out of the blueprint stage, one might say. These two factors together are called an exemplar or idea.

---

[1] St. Thomas Aquinas, *Sum. Theol.*, I, 22, 1, *Resp.*

The exemplar or practical knowledge does not always get things on their feet. Some things the exemplar leaves, so to say, in the blueprint stage. In either event, the exemplar involves a divine will-act: the will to create, if things are to be created; the will to be able to create, if things are to be left in the blueprint stage. The exemplar

> belongs to the knowledge which is practical either actually or habitually; but it does not belong solely to that knowledge which is actually practical, because a thing can be called an exemplar from the fact that something can be made according to it, even though it never should be made; and so for the divine ideas.[2]

This suggests that the divine exemplar can be viewed either as the plan of the things which were, are, and will be, or as the plan of the things which never will be, although they might have been or could be.

In the first case the exemplar is actually practical; in the second it is habitually practical. In both cases there is, besides the specificative factor of practical knowledge which accounts for what is or can be made, the voluntary factor, which renders the reason why things which are made *are* made, and why the things which are not made *can* be made even though they are not. In other words, there is *always* the divine will-act in practical knowledge: the actual will-act which wills things into existence, and, failing the actual will-act, the habitual will-act which wills to be able to produce things, and to have the knowledge necessary to produce them, even though those things will never be produced.[3]

It is thoroughly misleading, therefore, to isolate the plan-part (*ratio ordinis*, or providence) of the divine exemplar from that factor which inseparably accompanies it, viz., the part the Divine Will plays in the plan. As if God's plans were not *all* willed. As if

[2] St. Thomas Aquinas, *De Verit.*, III, 3, ad 3. Vd. *loc. cit.*, III, 6, *Resp.*, et ad 3, 4; *Sum. Theol.*, I, 15, 3.

[3] St. Thomas Aquinas, *De Verit.*, III, 6, *Resp.*, et ad 3; *loc. cit.*, III, 3; II, 8.

anything creaturely were imposed upon God's intellect. All God's plans are willed: the ones which get on their feet He wills actually; the ones which do not, He wills to be able to get them on their feet, and to have the knowledge to get them there.

> What has to be said is that providence is in the intellect, but it presupposes the willing of the end; for no one gives a precept about things done for an end, unless he wills the end . . . and even supposing that providence were equally related to the divine will and intellect, this would not affect the divine simplicity, since in God both will and intellect are one and the same thing.[4]

PROVIDENCE AND CHANCE

It might seem that the chance event is not subject to providence. A foreseen event cannot, it seems, happen by chance; and God's providence must foresee all events.

The objection assumes that a chance event is one which cannot be foreseen, and so, if it *is* foreseen, it is not a chance event. The assumption is false. A chance event is the intersection which is not given in their causality, of causal lines. Such an event could be foreseen by an ideal observer. If it were, the event would nevertheless remain a chance event precisely because it occurred, not by the causality of the lines, but by their plurality and direction. True, we are not ideal observers, because we are not causes of the existence of plurality. This is why we cannot predict chance events with absolute certainty. But God can, because He causes plurality, and by causing plurality He causes the chance event. In sum, God causes the chance event by causing plural lines to intersect, not by their causality, but by His causality of their plurality and direction. That is why He is absolutely certain of the chance event, and why, nevertheless, the event remains chance.

To say, therefore, that with God there is no chance event is to show oneself insufficiently analytical. There are chance events in regard to God, not because they are unforeseen by Him (as they usually are by us), nor because His foresight of them makes them cease to be chance events. There are chance events in regard to

---

[4] St. Thomas Aquinas, *Sum. Theol.*, I, 22, 1, ad 3.

God, and they are foreseen, because He makes intersectors to intersect by His causality, not theirs, of their being and direction.

PROVIDENCE AND EVIL

"A wise provider excludes any defect or evil, as far as he can, from those over whom he has care. But we see many evils existing in things. Either, then, God cannot hinder these, and thus is not omnipotent; or else He does not have care for everything."[5]

It would be hard to state with fuller comprehension and completer accuracy the most stunning of all problems. Either God can't do anything about evil, or He won't. The answer, so far as an answer is accessible, may well imitate the cold, dry precision of the difficulty. It is useless to search for an anodyne against evil.

There are two sorts of evil: physical and moral. Both are privations, a negation of what should be in a being and is not: for example, blindness in a man. It is no evil for a tree not to see, nor for a baby to crawl instead of walk. These privations may be in the structure of a being, or in its activity. Defective eyes (structure), for example, cause squinting (activity); so, a short leg causes limping. In the moral order, vice (structure) causes sinning (activity). Thus, there are evil beings and evil actions in both the order of physical nature and moral nature.[6]

We must now try to see what causes both sorts of evil, and thus grow to some understanding why God allows both.

¶ *Physical evil.* Let us limit the discussion, first, to the causality of physical evil in physical agents only, excluding thereby the problem of moral evil and physical evil in moral agents.

There is no particular difficulty in seeing that defective physical actions come from defective physical agents: limping, *e.g.*, comes from a sprain. The question becomes more penetrating when we ask what causes defective agency or structure, what causes the sprain. Apparently, defective structure is the accidental result of a per se cause. A per se cause envisages by nature, or by knowledge, the attainment of a certain good. Carnivores, for example, live on meat, herbivores on plants, and microbes live on tissue. This is good for them, but it is certainly not good for the things they eat. Here we have a conflict of physical goods. It is good that there be light, but not for weak eyes. It is good to eat bacon, but it is not good for the hog. Is this privation of another's good intended, calculated by the nature or knowledge of the agents involved? Not precisely. They intend their own good. This, their own good, is the per se result of their causality. Another's loss is quite incidental or accidental to the per se result which they envisage. They wish food. That the food they get is someone or something else is no skin off their nose. Thus, physical privations are the accidental result of a per se cause. There was no intention in the stone of turning your ankle, nor was there any intention in you of letting it. That both lines of causality, yours and its, happened to conflict was incidental.

---

[5] St. Thomas Aquinas, *Sum. Theol.*, I, 22, 2, obj. 2.

[6] Sometimes privations arise from poor instruments or poor material. A hammer will scarcely do a saw's job, and one cannot weave a rope of sand.

We may now ask if this situation is necessary. Must one physical agent profit at the physical expense of another? In a world of contrary physical goods this must be so. ". . . the life of the lion would not be preserved unless the ass were killed."[7] Contrariety of physical goods must cause, though incidentally, physical evil.

We may next go on to ask why physical goods are contraries. In one way this is a silly question, in another it is not. It is silly if we mean our question as a complaint—as if we asked, why are all cocktails good, only some are better? Certainly, there cannot be many goods and none better than another, else they would not be many. But the question is not silly if we mean to ask what purpose contrary goods serve. Contrary goods serve, by their multiplicity, to imitate the infinite perfection of God. A dead level of endless repetitions is no more befitting divine art than human. Contemplate a row of identical bungalows. If they are all an architect can show, he must indeed be short of plans; and we should not know what to think of him if his bungalows were all roof, or all porch. Endless repetition, whether of wholes or just parts, is no token of an artist's mind nor is it of God's. Unity in variety signifies richness, and such richness shows itself by contrary goods.

---

[7] St. Thomas Aquinas, *Sum. Theol.*, I, 48, 2, ad 3.

In sum, physical evils or the succession of contrary goods, one sickening or killed to the profit of another, are a matter of profit from loss, a matter of sacrificing the parts for the good of the whole. This situation is inevitable (it is not necessary; there need not be the situation at all) in a world of physical contrary goods if they are to show forth by their variety the rich unity of God.

¶ *Physical evil in a moral agent.* The above answer would be fully satisfying if physical evils in physical agents were the only evils there are. They are not the only ones. Nor are they the worst.

There are, first, physical evils in a moral agent. Some of these, we can easily see, have their place. Some pains, for example, are a warning; others are natural sanctions for defect and excess. As for the rest, it is all very well to point out that physical evils are for the total good of the physical universe. They are indeed. But it so happens that man is not merely one physical unit among others. He is a person, and we cannot allow that it is good for a person to subserve, say, the fuller life of parasitic fungi. Still less can we see, on the level of philosophy, any consolation for death. Rachel bewailed her children, and she would not be consoled.

The only answer to the situation is that physical evils in a moral agent arise, first, from the fact that man is also a physical agent, and, secondly, from sin. The first part of that answer is the one already given. The second part of the answer is of course drawn from revelation, but even apart from revelation a good case could be made for the connection of sin with the evils of mankind. Newman did so.[8] It is only revelation, however, which can fully support the contention that physical evils in a moral agent arise in part from sin. Adam transmitted to mankind death and the pains of the body.[9] Death and pains of the body, these were not God's original plan. His original plan called for Paradise on earth and hereafter the Beatific Vision. Adam wrecked all that. One must add that God,

---

[8] Newman, *Apologia Pro Vita Sua,* Ch. V; ed. C. F. Harrold (New York: Longmans, Green, 1947), p. 219.

[9] Conc. Carthag., Can. 2; Conc. Araus. II, Can. 2; Conc. Trident., Sess. 5a, Can. 2, Can. 5. Vd. H. Denzinger, *Enchiridion Symbolorum, Definitionum et Declarationum de Rebus Fidei et Morum;* ed. Bannwart-Umberg (Friburgi Brisgoviae: B. Herder, 1922), sub nn. 102, 175, 789, 791.

Who alone can draw good from evil, did even better for us after the disaster—*mirabilius reformasti*. We shall return to this point.

¶ *Moral evil and providence.* Of all evils the worst is not physical. It is moral evil, sin.

A simple way to see rightly the place sin occupies in God's providence is to ask this question. Would you be complimented by being told you were good because you couldn't help being good? Would you feel yourself blameworthy for faults for which you are not responsible? Common sense says no. And it says no, because we all have the conviction that the very possibility of being morally good or bad is necessarily connected with the possibility of *not* being morally good or bad. No man, we know, is good or bad unless he wishes to be, and by that very token no man can wish to be good or bad unless he can also wish *not* to be good or bad. This means that a created, free agent which would by nature be impeccable is a contradiction in terms.[10] God cannot make a free agent for whom sin is, by nature, an impossibility. This being so, we can begin to see that the possibility of sin is a necessity in a world of free agents.

Free agents are the only agents which can be happy. Happiness is the possession of the Good, God and His gifts. To possess these one must love them, and only he loves who does so freely. Thus, the possibility of sin is the only price which can purchase happiness. No man can be happy unless he wishes to be, and no man can wish to be happy who cannot also wish not to be happy, that is, cannot also wish to sin. One who would wish the situation otherwise is voting himself out of the job of being a man.[11] In sum, the only way a free agent can be happy is by wishing to be, and the only way one can wish to be happy is by having also the possibility of *not* wishing to be. That possibility is the possibility of sinning.

¶ *The causality of sin.* The primary analogate of sin is an evil intention. Evil intention issues from a defect in the structure of the agent—as limping issues from a short leg. Hence it would seem either that sinning (evil intention) is anteceded by sinning (the defective structure of the agent), or else that the defect in the agent occurs by accidental causality, as a leg is accidentally caused to be short. The first alternative leads to an endless series of sin anteceded by sin, which series is irrelevant and impossible. The second alternative would deny man's responsibility for his sin.

---

[10] St. Thomas Aquinas, *Sum. Theol.*, I, 63, 1.

[11] Sin, happiness, God's gift of Himself—there is no reason for refusing to accept the supernatural situation which these terms in part imply. Besides, even apart from revelation it is demonstrable that man is obliged to do good and avoid evil with a total devotedness which is *assured* of the happiness of the outcome even though man may not know from reason precisely what that outcome may be. The essential point is that man, in order to be happy, must freely choose the good, and he cannot do that unless he can, as freely, choose evil.

The solution briefly is as follows.[12] An evil intention is anteceded by a defect in the agent which he himself causes voluntarily, freely, but unsinfully. That defect is the refusal of the agent to consider himself bound by law—despite his knowing that he *is* bound, in a given case. Due to the agent's free initiative this refusal is nevertheless unsinful, because it is not yet the evil intention, not yet the unregulated action. It is the lack of a principle of regulated action, namely, law. To illustrate: the lack of a mitre-board is not the defective sawing of a plank. Nevertheless to saw without a mitre-board, or its equivalent, is to saw defectively. Just so here, to lack the principle of regulated action (law), even though that lack be a freely willed lack, is not yet to posit the bad intention; nevertheless one who acts without the guidance of law, whose guidance he has refused, will posit a bad intention. He will sin, not because he has sinned, but because, having unsinfully and freely willed to be without the guidance of law, he proceeds to posit freely an intention which is by hypothesis not in accordance with law. This is sin, an intention exercised without any regulative principle.

PROVIDENCE AND NECESSITY

Awhile back we spoke of man spoiling God's original plan. What sort of *creative* plan, one may ask, is that which can be spoiled?

It is tempting to answer the difficulty thus: God's plan is not frustrated, because He had also planned the frustration, like the man whose will cannot be crossed because, he says, "Oh well, that's what I meant anyway."

---

[12] Vd. J. Maritain, *St. Thomas and the Problem of Evil* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1942), pp. 20–29. The pertinent texts from St. Thomas are given in this lecture.

Already given,[13] the answer will merely be recalled here. The answer emerges from two basic points. First, nothing, absolutely nothing has any claim on *esse* apart from the causality of God. Second, there are free choices. Free choices, therefore, are caused to be free by divine causality. Paraphrase it as we may, that seems to be the only answer possible.

One or other paraphrase may be useful. We are inevitably inclined to think that God's plan cannot be eternally fixed or certain about things which are *not* fixed. If God's plan calls for Peter's denial of Christ, we reason, Peter must, willy-nilly, deny Christ. It is not so. We incline to think it is so, because we forget that God's plan calls for Peter's *free* denial of Christ. And we forget that, because we really have no resources to conceive the creative act which gets anything into *esse;* and still less can we conceive how creation gets Peter's free denial into *esse*. Yet this is exactly what the divine plan does: it gets the free act into *esse* as a free act. Again, we think that because God must know everything, therefore everything He knows must be. It is not so. Not everything He knows (and He must know everything) must be. Some things must be, others will, but need not, be; or could, but will not, be; or could have been, but cannot now be. Necessity attaches to God's knowledge of all events. To the events themselves which are not necessary, *e.g.*, free choices, no antecedent necessity attaches, precisely because that is the way creative causality makes them to stand in *esse*, viz., as free. Again, we incline to think that if providence (the plan) and its execution (governance) coincide, this coincidence must be due to some jugglery which showed us first the free act and then made it vanish into necessity. We forget that although essences never coincide, nevertheless *esse* and the cause of *esse* do. I mean, the *esse* of the things governed is in being precisely as its cause puts it there. The blueprint of creation cannot get on its feet, cannot even be able to get on its feet, apart from the causality of

---

[13] Cf. Chaps. XIII and XIV on the knowledge and will of God. Vd. St. Thomas Aquinas, *Sum. Theol.*, I, 103, 7–8.

God. If so, nothing in that blueprint is in the order of essences. It is all in the order of *esse* or *posse esse*, and both come from God. One could go on and on, paraphrasing the matter, but all paraphrases would still leave us before the mystery of a cause of *esse*.

Can man, then, frustrate God's plan? By a frustration which is provided for in an over-all plan which cannot be frustrated, yes.[14] But isn't this to say that God always has His own way because He always lets us have ours? It is indeed. But it is also to say that to let us have our own way is precisely for God to have His way. One could also state the situation in reverse: for God to have His way, this is for us to have ours. St. Augustine remarks on the situation thus: when one speaks of liberty one seems to deny divine causality; and when one speaks of divine causality, it is liberty which one seems to deny.[15] That is the fact, but it is the fact because we have no resources to conceive how much God transcends creatures. We can only demonstrate that He does, and that it is by the very transcendence of His causality that the free act is possible.

Suggested Reading

On providence:

St. Thomas Aquinas, *In I Sent.*, 39, 2, 1–2; *In Periherm.*, I, lect. 13–14; *In De Div. Nom.*, III, lect. 1; *Contra Gentiles*, III, 1; III, 64; III, 75–79; III, 94; III, 124–125; *Sum. Theol.*, I, 15, 3; I, 22, 1–2; I, 48, 2; *De Verit.*, III, 3 and 6; II, 8; V, 1–10; *De Sub. Sep.*, Chs. XIII–XV; *Comp. Theol.*, Chs. 123, 130–133.
Cochrane, C., *Christianity and Classical Culture*, Ch. XII.
Gilson, E., *The Spirit of Mediaeval Philosophy*, Ch. VIII.

Providence and evil:

St. Thomas Aquinas, *Contra Gentiles*, III, 7–9; *Sum. Theol.*, I, 22, 2; I, 45, 2; I, 48, 1–3; I, 49, 1; *De Malo*, I, 1; *Comp. Theol.*, Ch. 15.
D'Arcy, M. C., S.J., *Pain and the Providence of God.*
Maritain, J., *St. Thomas and the Problem of Evil*, pp. 1–19.

[14] St. Thomas Aquinas, *Sum. Theol.*, I, 103, 8, *Resp.*

[15] St. Augustine, *De Gratia Christi*, I, 47 (PL 44, col. 383). St. Augustine's term, for which I have substituted "causality," is "grace."

Providence and moral evil:

St. Thomas Aquinas, *Contra Gentiles*, II, 46; III, 10 and 13; *Sum. Theol.*, I, 49, 1; I, 63, 1; *De Verit.*, V, 2; *De Malo*, I, 3.

Maritain, J., *St. Thomas and the Problem of Evil*, pp. 20–39.

Providence and necessity:

St. Thomas Aquinas, *In I Sent.*, 32, 2, 2; *In Periherm.*, I, lect. 13–14; *In Metaph.*, VI, lect. 3; *Contra Gentiles*, III, 72 and 94; *Sum. Theol.*, I, 22, 4; I, 103, 7–8; *Comp. Theol.*, Chs. 139–140.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of all knowledge is to explain. When we say: "this is so, because . . . ," we feel that we know. Thus there are two factors in all knowledge which explains: a thing to be explained and its explanation.

An explanation is constituted by two reasons. One of these reasons explains why a thing is what it is. The other reason explains why a thing, which is what it is, exists. The first reason may be called a law, an essence, a nature, a universal—all these are, in the present matter, roughly equivalent terms. The second reason, which explains why a law, an essence, etc., exists, is called a cause. Law and cause, these two constitute any full explanation. One reason without the other is a deficient explanation.

Law or the framework of action is not the reason for, or cause of, action. Nor is the reason or cause of action the framework of action. If we say, water boils at 212° sea level, we state a law, but we do not thereby state a cause of water boiling. To know what will happen (to know law) is not forthwith to know a cause, *i.e.*, to know why what happens happens. To know both is fully to explain.[1]

The two constituents of a full explanation, law and cause, can never be quite identical with the thing to be explained, not even in mathematical explanations. In mathematics we explain when we see that the quantities on both sides of our equation are equal. Equal, but not identical. For, the quantities represent things which are not in the same place. We consider, however, that their place makes no difference between two equal quantities. Nor does it. A hundred pounds is a hundred pounds, whether it be here or there. Yet there is a difference between a thing here and that same thing there. Coriscus at home and in the marketplace weighs exactly the same, but for Coriscus to be home is not the same as for Coriscus to be in the marketplace. Nor is his presence in either place to be explained by his quantity. Still less, of course, can Coriscus' stupidity at home, and his wisdom in the marketplace, be explained by his quantity; and it is even less possible to explain Coriscus alive at home, and dead in the marketplace by a difference in his quantity.

---

[1] Aristotle, *Post. Analy.*, I, 13, 78a 23; I, 1, 71b 8; I, 3, 72b 3; I, 6, 74b 26; Plato, *Phaedo*, 98 sqq.

If mathematics cannot achieve an absolute identity between an explanation and a thing to be explained, no other science can be expected to do so. The identity simply cannot be achieved. For, assume that the identity between an explanation and the thing to be explained has been achieved. We have then explained away what we started to explain. That is, not only is there nothing left to explain, there was nothing to explain in the first place. It was simply our ignorance which made us think there was.

If we agree that an explanation and the thing to be explained cannot be identified, because such an identification would swamp one or other term in its very otherness, we are confronted with an astounding situation. We say "x is so, because y is so." Yet there is something in y which is not quite x, else there wouldn't *be* any x at all. One can read the situation backwards with the same result: there is something in x which cannot be reduced to y, else there would not *be* any y.

Only two ways to face this situation are possible. We may say, first, that the seeming difference between x and y is an illusion. Parmenides of Elea took that way. Or, secondly, we may say that since there is a difference between x and y, and since nevertheless y does explain x, we had better leave the matter at that. In other words, we had better allow that a cause transcends, because it cannot be reduced to, the thing to be explained; and nevertheless a cause's causality is immanent in, because it does explain, the thing to be explained. In doing this, clearly we are putting an explanation a notch above the *explanandum.* We are saying: there is a surplus in an explanation over and above the *explanandum;* causal antecedents transcend their consequents by as much as antecedents differ in *esse* from their consequents. We are also saying: since the *esse* of consequents does find its reason for existing in the antecedents, these antecedents are, by their causality, immanent in the consequents. This is to explain through a cause. The "other" is the cause. To this "other" we ascribe that which is *not* the "other," *viz.*, the effect. An astounding mystery this, the mystery of causality: an explanation of that which is *not* the other (the effect) *by* the other (the cause).

The first way, Parmenides', of facing the situation was never successfully maintained. Differences between antecedents and consequents, between explanations and *explananda*, are too apparent to be denied. Besides, to assert identity of antecedents and consequents is to commit intellectual suicide.

The second way of facing the situation, namely by understanding the effect in terms of its cause, has maintained itself more or less successfully throughout the history of thought. More or less successfully, not in the sense that the principle of causality was ever successfully denied, but in the sense that the "other" (the cause) was more or less successfully located.

The pre-Socratics located the cause in a love and strife of atoms. Affinity, discord, these were the causes they assigned. Such forces could indeed get lumpish atoms off their feet (cause), start them buzzing, so to say, and make them form different configurations (law); and if bodies differ only by their sensible appearances, we do have in atomism an explanation of one sort of difference, the difference of shape or figure.

Plato and Aristotle saw that a profounder explanation was necessary, because the differences of bodies are profounder than sensible differences. The generated and corrupted—these differ *toto coelo* from their antecedents. The son of Coriscus is not a different configuration of the atoms of Coriscus, and the dead body of either is not the living. To think that Coriscus and his son are the same, except in the different configurations of the same sort of atoms, is to think that the difference between *steak* and *Keats* is like the difference in the rearrangement of the letters of the two words.[2]

Plato thought that differences came from his Ideas. Platonic Ideas, according to Aristotle, can get nothing done—they do not have what it takes to be causes. Aristotle himself located the cause of all change in the motion of the sun along the inclined circle, *i.e.*, in the ecliptic or zodiac circle.[3]

St. Thomas Aquinas deems that all the above explanations are concerned with the right things to be explained. For the pre-Socratics the thing to be explained is *this* being. For Plato and Aristotle the thing to be explained is *such* a being. All these men, thinks St. Thomas, are turning about and exploring the correct problem. What keeps them from the full explanation to it, he thinks, is that they do not see that we must have a cause of *being*, not merely of *this* or *such* being. Had they seen that, they would have found in a cause of *being* the cause also of *this* and *such* being. For, the cause of *ens* causes the causes of individuation and substance to exist, and therefore it causes individuality and substance.[4]

The need and nature of a cause of *ens habens esse* has been the theme of this book. We may now assess our findings.

To say that God is the cause of *ens habens esse* is to say that He is the ultimate explanation not only why things are (cause), but also why they are what they are (law). It is by His *esse* as cause that natures, which are governed by law, exist. God is the cause of their *esse*, and so He is also the source of their law.

We are hindered from realising that God is both the cause of beings and the source of their laws, because we too readily assume that law in nature is cause. We too readily make this assumption, because once we have discovered law we seem to have discovered cause. When we ask, *e.g.*, why we digest our dinner, and answer that we digest it because of a stomach and food, we seem to have given a sufficient answer. "We digest our dinner, don't we? Well?" The answer is insufficient. First, there must *be* a stomach and food. *Then* we get the operation of digestion. Now there won't *be* stomach and food upon the score that *if* there is, there will be digestion. The union of law and cause, however, is so much a hand-in-glove affair that we normally see no need of distinguishing the hand from the glove, no need of asking why a nature, which will follow a fixed law if it exists, does exist. Besides, we are convinced, and rightly, that law and cause are ultimately reducible to one another. Rightly convinced, because only in this identification can the universe find its ultimate explanation. As Plato remarked, the reason why the world has its present shape must, ultimately, be because it is good for it to be so shaped.[5] As much as to say that since the universe in the last analysis is explainable, and we know it is, we know therefore, however obscurely, that God exists: God indeed is One for Whom to be God is to be.

---

[2] Aristotle, *De Gen. et Corrup.*, I, 2, 315b 6–318b 16.

[3] Aristotle, *De Gen. et Corrup.*, II, 10, 336a 32. Vd. Ross, fn. *in h.l.*

[4] St. Thomas Aquinas, *Sum. Theol.*, I, 44, 2, *Resp.* For the references to Greek sources see, *in h.l.*, *S. Thomae de Aquino Ordinis Praedicatorum Summa Theologiae* (Ottawa: Impensis Studii Generalis O. Pr., 1941), Vol. I, p. 280b; or A. C. Pegis, *Basic Writings of St. Thomas Aquinas* (New York: Random House, 1944), Vol. I, p. 428 *ad calc.* Aristotle, *Metaph.*, I, 3–4, 983b 6–985b 22; *Phys.*, IV, 6, 213a 29; *Metaph.*, II, 5, 1002a 8; *De Gen. et Corrup.*, II, 9, 335b 24; *Phys.*, I, 4, 187a 30; *Phys.*, I, 4, 187a 15; *De Gen. et Corrup.*, II, 9, 336a 4; *Phys.*, I, 8, 191a 27; *Metaph.*, I, 4, 985a 8; *Phys.*, I, 5, 188b 34; *Phys.*, VIII, 1, 250b 24. Cf. also St. Thomas Aquinas, *In Phys.*, I, lect. 15.

Those who lack a distinct demonstration of God's existence inevitably reduce law to cause before it is legitimate to do so. They say, for example: water boils at 212° sea level, given the proper conditions. They do not realise that this or any law is extra-existential, because the giving of the conditions is extra-legal. Once one sees that the legal is not identically the existential (because essence is not *esse*), and once one sees that it is by *esse* and its cause that there *is* the legal, then and only then may one reduce cause to law in One Whose essence is His *esse*. Before one sees all that, it is illegitimate to find in law the reason for *esse* (cause). Of course those will never admit this illegitimacy who have never taken a square look at *esse* and seen that it is contingent.

The amusing result of the failure to distinguish law and cause is a lapse into mythology. [6] J. Huxley, e.g., explains the advent of life by Struggle, or Vast Forces.[7] Sir James Jeans in his *Mysterious Universe*[8] explains the advent of life by saying that after a collision of stars, then "in the course of time . . . one of the cooling fragments gave birth to life." As one might say, you get sick, because in the course of time you get sick. Dr. Franz Alexander thinks to explain the advent of life by saying that it has a formula[9]—as if a good dinner were explained by the recipes alone and not also by the cook. Mythologists, modern style, will even emulate their Greek predecessors, at least by saying the same thing over again in Greek. Plants, they tell us, are green because of chlorophyl; or, yellow, because of acanthophyl; black boils are from the *bacillus anthrax*, and so on. Mythological to the extent that they make law alone carry the charge of explanation which only law and cause together can carry, all these explanations cause the fuse of intelligence to blow. The charge was too strong. No wonder one is left muttering about Vast Forces, Struggle, Survival (it is "arrival" we must explain), a mysterious "then" from which life comes, or a Dawn, or Orthogenesis. All this capitalized nonsense is nothing but the reviviscence of a mythology, minus the honesty of a Plato who called it plainly by its true name, a myth.

---

[5] Plato, *Timaeus*, 33 ff.

[6] Cf. E. Gilson, *God and Philosophy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1941), pp. 135, 136.

A cause is not nonsense. It is the reason why the potential is reduced to act: only the actual "is," and so the actual must either be uncaused, or, if caused, reducible to the uncaused—if the actual is to be. It is quite true that we cannot always successfully locate among second causes the actual cause which we know exists. But we can always successfully locate the cause of "is." It is God, Who is identically His act of existing.

When we say we can successfully locate the cause of "is," we must realize that we do not locate Him as we do the cause of heat in hot water. *That* cause is a heating agent, and that agent transcends its effect (the heat of hot water) only by as much as it has the surplus (heat) which the water as water does not have. And so we

[7] J. Huxley, *Essays of a Biologist* (New York: Knopf, 1923), p. 220.

[8] Sir James Jeans, *Mysterious Universe* (London: Macmillan & Co., 1932), pp. vii, 3, 13.

[9] Cf. M. J. Adler, *What Man Has Made of Man* (New York: Longmans, Green, 1937), p. xiv.

say that the heat of the hot water is to be explained by the "other" heat of the heater. But that "other" heat transcends only the heat of the water; it does not transcend the existence of the water. As to its own existence, the heater does not transcend that either. It cannot cause itself, nor can its own existence be uncaused. Both heater and heated are on the same level insofar as their *esse* is concerned. Their *esse* is caused. Thus we come to an uncaused cause of *their esse*. At this point we have located a cause of *esse*. But *how?* As one who *finds* what he seeks? Not exactly. We locate the cause of *esse* as one who rather *seeks* what he has found. Our descriptions of God are like "blind lions seeking water in a desert." We know that God is, but He is unlike anything we know. We know that everything is like Him, but we do not know what He is like. God wholly transcends His effects, because His "is" is not at all like theirs. Nevertheless, since the "is" of any of His effects is due to Him and is like Him, He is wholly present to or immanent in all of them. Transcendence and immanence, these are the two characteristics of any cause. When the cause involved is God, then our causal explanation is at its peak load of intelligibility. Then the two characteristics of a cause make our explanation sputter, or rather, they make us sputter. We cannot even start talking about what God is—we stammer. Once started we cannot stop talking about God—we stutter. *Balbutiendo loquimur de Deo.* And yet our stammerings and stutterings are not those of mystagogues about their myths. They are the stammerings and stutterings of theologians, of mystics perhaps, about the mystery of God.

At this point, when we are condemned to speak haltingly of God, when anything we say or can say of Him falls short of its object, when we must acknowledge that we cannot know God but only "how all the rest is related to Him," at this point it would seem reasonable to let the matter rest without further talk, and go about our other business. The fact is we never let this matter rest, and that somehow we seem to feel there is no other business. Why is this so? Why don't we face *this* situation as we do an unlettered tombstone: "whoever he is, *there* he is,—and now let's all have our picnic"? Why do we deem that the proved affirmation of God's existence is not at all enough, that there is much more at stake than to say *God is*, indeed that now everything is at stake?

It is easy to say, and it is true to say it, that the knowledge that there is a cause does not satisfy us until we have known what that cause is. Such indeed is the nature of knowledge, never to rest until it knows all that can be known. But we are not much bothered by failing to know what causes are in other instances. We say, the spirochete causes paresis, and some time we shall get around, or one of the boys will get around, to studying the spirochete. Meanwhile, would you look at this curious *bacillus anthrax?* We have forgotten all about the spirochete. This is not our attitude after we've proved that God causes the universe. Why is it not?

Were we philosophers and nothing more—reduplicatively philosophers, as philosophy would say—we would be satisfied to have reduced the many to the One, to have understood the many as caused to be by the One. We would have an explanation of the universe, all right, but our explanation would be of the universe, not of God. And this indeed is the way the matter stands. We discover God as the causal explanation of the world, and thus it is the world, not God, which is explained. As philosophers there is nothing more left for us to say than just that.

As men, however, we are not fully satisfied to know that God exists, and how His creatures are related to Him. Indeed, speculative knowledge of any sort, though it is exhaustive in its own line, never exhausts our further interest in the same matter. Still less does it exhaust our interests in other matters. We seem to keep turning over and over, constantly, indefatigably, a rubbish pile, in order, apparently, to discover something which is not there. And this we do whether we know or do not know that what we seek is not in the pile. Like pearl merchants we are on the lookout for a fine pearl; only, we cannot find the pearl, and indeed we have no precise advance knowledge where or what that pearl is.

The above is the state of affairs which finally confronts philosophy: we seek something, we know not exactly what, and we never find it.

Now it is easy enough to say, and it is true enough to say it, that what we are really seeking is God. *Fecisti nos ad te Domine, et irrequietum ese cor nostrum donec quiescat in te.*[10] Indeed, philosophy can quite well make stick the proposition that the end of man is to know God. Possessed of that proposition philosophy can explain our search, its temporal frustration, the prospect of its final satisfaction. But there overlies that answer a mystery which a philosopher cannot penetrate, the mystery that man is summoned to and by a Good, he knows not what. If only we knew that Good! If only like the wise virgins, we saw and were going in with the Spouse! Then there would be repose in the mystery. But we are like both the wise and the foolish virgins: we are all simply awaiting a summons. Here we have the most exciting situation in the world. We hope for repose in a good which, precisely because it is hoped for, and with a philosophical certainty which surpasses all other certainties, is a gift. A gift can come only from a giver, that is, from one who loves.

It may be that we do not fully appreciate the situation in which this leaves us. No doubt the reason for this is partly because the supernatural virtues of faith, hope, and charity have long accustomed us to a supernatural prostration before the utter transcendence of God. Yet, suppose there were no supernatural order, as is entirely possible. Where and in what would man find repose? In creatures? Then why do they not cause that repose now? Perhaps we should say, we shall find repose in the next life if not now. But that answer simply evades the question. For, in this next life, will it *still* be creatures which cause our repose? If so, our future repose might well be more reposeful than it is now, but, still and all, such future repose cannot be definitive, because it is simply not in creatures to give what they do not have. If, now, repose cannot be had either in this life or the next from creatures, what is our natural hope hoping for? To say that we have no such hope in something beyond creatures is to set oneself squarely against the wisdom of mankind. Plato speaks for us all when he says that, "no harm can come to the good man in this life or the next." [11] How do we all know that, and in the very teeth of evidence to the contrary: Dives, Lazarus? Were one to say that in the next life Dives was punished and Lazarus rewarded, this is true. But it is not recorded that Lazarus reposed in the next life in purple and fine linen, feasting sumptuously every day, nor that Dives lay full of sores, hungry and ragged at Lazarus' gate. Lazarus was in Abraham's bosom, and Dives in hell. This is not a repose caused by creatures. Yet Lazarus' lot is what we all hope for, and Dives' what we all fear.

---

[10] St. Augustine, *Confessions,* I, 1 (PL 32, col. 661).

[11] Plato, *Crito,* 54 ff.; *Apology,* 30 ff.

One may also read the situation from the viewpoint of God. Could God leave man's natural hope for repose unsatisfied? No doubt, no doubt. Would He? We cannot think so.[12]

The above is the mystery which philosophy faces. Read it from either end. It remains a mystery. Philosophy knows that man can find no rest in creaturely goods, and philosophy hopes for better. Yet philosophy cannot discern in what manner God is to give Himself. Or, read it as follows: A lover, God, could possibly not-give Himself—for such is the nature of love: to be able to refuse love. Yet God would not fail to give Himself—for such too is the nature of love: it would not refuse love.

Upon this mystery philosophy can at least let play the light of several philosophical propositions. Naturally these propositions can do no more than descry what they cannot see.

First, man is not made to know things. If he were, he would find repose in such knowledge, and he finds none. Yet man cannot know what he is made to know, without knowing things. Idealism is a dead-end.

Second, man is not a nature like other natures.[13] Natures short of man follow necessarily the laws of action which their structure dictates. A tree, an alligator, will be no better tomorrow than they are today. We should feel very foolish in exhorting them "to be good." They will be as good as they possibly can, barring chance. But a man we exhort to be good, because, apart from chance, he can fail to be good. His "nature" is not only in the making, its making is within his own hands. No one can tell from inspecting his original endowments what a man will be. One can, in principle, tell what any given physical nature will be. All natures can, in principle, be named down to their last atom. Man's name is the name he gives himself, *e.g.*, a voluptuous nature, a charitable, an ambitious, a thieving essence.[14] And that name not even the individual himself can know except in his acts of charity, of ambition, and so on. Still less can an individual know the name he is slowly spelling out, until it is all spelled out. Then will be fixed forever the name we give ourselves.

---

[12] A. C. Pegis, "Nature and Spirit: Some Reflections on the Problem of the End of Man," *Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association*, Vol. XXIII (1949), p. 79.

[13] Cf. H. de Lubac, S.J., *Surnaturel*, pp. 247, 253–259, 454.

Thirdly, man is a person. (This proposition is really the first two telescoped, yet it develops the second proposition.) Taking himself by the scruff of his own neck, a man commits himself to, engages himself, involves himself, in living. Apart from these commitments a man is no more than what is under his own skin—like any stick in a corner. Committed to live, he becomes much more than what is circumscribed by his hide. Much more, not merely quantitatively, though it is true he takes on weight. Much more, not merely qualitatively, though it is true he grows grey and old. He becomes much more by a qualitative development in terms of what he loves and knows. Literally and physically a man can never be the "other." By love and knowledge he can be the "other." By knowledge he can be the other as other. By love he can be the other as self. It is too late to explain these statements now.[15] Recall simply the types of character which art produces in the theatre and in novels, *e.g.*, Sir John Falstaff. What the artist effects in fiction, that a man effects in fact, in himself, by making himself to exist according to the specifications he chooses. We become the things we love, by loving them. To choose or to love is to liberate and specify the weight of love which we are (as if the steam in a boiler let itself out at the stopcock it pleased), and thus by one's acts of love one exists according to the configurations of the beloved. Our specification caused by knowledge alone, as when we say *there is a fish*, or, *fish are aquatic*, leave us spectators, grandstand quarterbacks. The specifications we cause in us by our love put us into the game, involve us in the play. Thus we extend, magnify, re-make our *esse naturae* by an *esse verum* which is *willed*. Thus we enter, not a world of things all in a row; we enter a world of means and ends. This signifies that we step into, take our place in, ranks which are marching to God.

---

[14] St. Thomas Aquinas, *Contra Gentiles,* IV, 25–50; *Sum. Theol.,* I–II, *Init.* Cf. L.-B. Geiger, O.P., "Existentialisme, essentialisme et ontologie existentielle," *Étienne Gilson Philosophe de la Chrétienté* (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1949), pp. 227–274.

[15] See Chaps. XIII and XIV.

Surely, then, man's characteristic life is of this world but not in it. It is true he must construct the temporal, build cities and scrutinize nature. But man is most himself when he commits himself by acts of love to a good. And because in this commitment he is but following the beckoning of an unlimited Good which is signaling him through a creature, man is most himself in the pursuit of the eternal. To love properly, whether one loves others or oneself, is to find oneself loving God. This is to eternalize the temporal, to live now in eternity.

A queer situation. Shall we say man is a queer beast, or a queer spirit? An angel fashions his nature by one stroke, one decision. A man fashions his nature by many, repeated decisions. Undoubtedly, the soul of man is a queer spirit—*est in confinio materiae et spiritus*.[16] So low in the order of spirit that he needs the body in order to "get going," so high, nevertheless, above matter that his characteristic acts transcend matter and space, man had best perhaps be looked upon as a loutish spirit.

Is he therefore a nature? If nature means a unit source of operations, yes, man is a nature. If nature means a unit source of operations whose objects (the things man intends) lie wholly within the orbit of limited goods, no, man is not a nature in that sense. Nature may mean an agent-activity-end, bounded on either end by limited goods, *e.g.*, acorn-activity-oak. Man's nature is not bounded at its terminus by a limited good. It is, at that spot, open to God, an Infinite Good. Man can close that God-end of his nature by loving God, and should death meet man when he has closed that end in charity, then will man be filled with the sempiternal fruition of divinity, then will man's nature be closed, but only as God's nature

[16] St. Thomas Aquinas, *Q. D. De Anima*, a. I, *Resp.*

is closed, *i.e.*, with the love of God which is, by participation, God's love of Himself.

In sum, the reason we are not satisfied to know about God or anything else is because we are made to know God, not to know about Him. And that we are made to know God would seem to be evinced by our intellectual natures which, however loutish, find no repose except in a good which is "in every way good" (*universaliter bonum*).[17]

•

Suggested Reading

On law and cause:

Plato, *Phaedo*, 98 sqq.

Aristotle, *Post. Analy.*, I, 3 and 13; *Phys.*, I, 5 and 8; IV, 6; VI, 1; *De Caelo*, III, 4; *De Gen. et Corrup.*, II, 9 and 10; *Metaph.*, I, 3 and 4; II, 3.

St. Thomas Aquinas, *In Phys.*, I, lect. 15; *Sum. Theol.*, I, 44, 2.

Gilson, E., *God and Philosophy*, pp. 135 sqq.

Meyerson, E., *Identité et realité*, Chs. I and XII.

Recent discussions on the end of man:

De Lubac, H., S.J., *Surnaturel.*

Donnelly, P. J., S.J., "On the Development of Dogma and the Supernatural," *Theological Studies*, VIII (1947), pp. 471–491; "Discussions on the Supernatural Order," *Theological Studies*, IX (1948), pp. 213–249.

Pegis, A. C., "Nature and Spirit: Some Reflections on the Problem of the End of Man," *Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association*, XXIII (1949), pp. 62–79.

Smith, G., S.J., "The Natural End of Man," *Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association*, XXIII (1949), pp. 47–61.

---

[17] St. Thomas Aquinas, *Sum. Theol.*, I–II, 9, 6.

APPENDIX

As the reader will have observed, I have kept the text clear of domestic disputes among Catholic theologians. Some reference to the famous Jesuit-Dominican dispute *de auxiliis* may legitimately be expected. This expectation I shall now try to meet with a brevity which may be pardoned in view of the fact that there is already a good-sized library upon the topic.

The dispute is over the way of reconciling the divine and the human causality of the human act.

Certain points are beyond all controversy. They are as follows: God's causality lies at the beginning of, accompanies and achieves the human act. So also does man's. Moreover, man's causality is under no coercion or necessitation from the causality of God.

The problem is so to reconcile these two causalities as to prejudice neither.

Luis de Molina, S.J. (*n.* 1535, *ob.* 1600) proposed the following solution.[1] If we are successfully to conceive that a human act is free under divine causality, we must allow that the necessary connection between the divine antecedents (prescience, providence, etc.) of the human act and the human act itself cannot lie wholly in the nature of those divine antecedents themselves. For, if this necessary connection were to have its *raison d'être* in those antecedents alone, the human act would not be free. On the other hand, it won't do to say, in order to preserve the necessary connection between its divine antecedents and the human act, that with those divine antecedents a man merely *could* act otherwise than as he does. For, what can-be might quite well not-be. For example, Peter's denial of Christ might quite well not have been; yet the divine causality of Peter's denial so causes that denial that it will be, and it will be by Peter's free act.

---

[1] Luis de Molina, S.J., *Concordia liberi arbitrii cum gratiae donis, divina praescientia, providentia, et reprobatione* (Paris: Lethielleux, 1876); F. Stegmüller, *Neue Molinaschriften, Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie und Theologie des Mittelalters*, Band XXXII.

In order to preserve both the liberty of Peter's denial and the necessary connection it has with its divine antecedent causality, it must be allowed, according to Molina, that midway between God's knowledge of what Peter can do (which knowledge is not yet certain knowledge, because it is not of what Peter will do) and God's knowledge of what Peter will do (which knowledge, if based solely upon antecedents which exclude Peter's choice, would destroy Peter's liberty), it must be, Molina says, that midway between these two sorts of divine knowledge (God's necessary, and God's free knowledge) there lies God's knowledge of what Peter freely *would* do were Peter confronted with choice. With this "in-between" divine knowledge (*scientia media*) Molina has a ready answer to the Reformers. Man is predestined. Of course. Then how can his choice be free from necessity? Because God knew, *scientia media*, before he predestined Peter, what Peter freely would do under the circumstances of Peter's choice. Man is free. Of course. Then how can he be predestined? Because God, in the inscrutable depths of His will, has chosen to effect the circumstances under which he foresaw, *scientia media*, what Peter would freely do.

Molina proposed this solution, because he saw in Dominic Bañes, O.P., a version of another solution of the problem which *he* thought was infected with the errors of the Reformers, Luther and Calvin.

Bañes' solution was this. God knows free acts in His own causality; but God causes free acts by His predetermining causality—for of such sort is the divine causality. This reasoning implies, first, that the reason for God's certainty about free acts is the divine predetermining decree; secondly, the reason for the efficacity of these decrees is the determination of choice *ad unum* which those decrees effect. As for liberty, liberty is explained by the fact that the divine predetermining decree, though physically effecting an *ad unum* choice, leaves untouched nevertheless the *potentia in utrumlibet*. For all this, Bañes' reason was that liberty grew out of its conditions. If, and since the divine antecedents of choice are infinitely efficacious, the *infinite* efficacity of them effects the mode of freedom in the free act.

As is clear, Bañes insists that it is the will of God, determining the future free act, which is the reason why God knows that act; and he insists that it is also the will of God which is the reason why, between human choice and its divine antecedents, there is an infallible connection. Of course, it is the infinite efficacity of the Divine Will which leaves untouched, causes even, the liberty of human choice.[2]

---

[2] For Bañes' text see F. Stegmüller, *op. cit.*, pp. 402–404, 431, 432. Stegmüller, *loc. cit.*, reproduces Bañes' text, which can be found in D. Bañes, *Schol. Comment. in I^{am} Partem;* ed. Douai, 1614, pp. 207 sqq.; 214, 215.

In order to bring out distinctly the position of Molina and Bañes we may set up this syllogism of the Reformers. *Major:* Antecedents to human choice which of themselves effect human choice are incompatible with the immunity of that choice from necessity, though they are not incompatible with the immunity of that choice from coercion. *Minor:* There are such antecedents of human choice, viz., divine antecedents. *Conclusion:* Therefore human choice is uncoerced but necessitated.[3] Molina denied the minor of the syllogism. Bañes denied the major. Both men denied that part of the conclusion which asserted the divine necessitation of human acts.

This controversy is still unsettled. Either position is orthodox. Neither position may tax the other with heresy.

It may not be out of place to indicate the reason why Jesuit theologians as a rule reject Bañes' solution. Bañes insists that it is the will of God which is the reason why there is a necessary connection between divine causality and human choice, *i.e.*, the reason why Peter will do what he will do is because God wills him to do it. Of course, Bañes also maintains that it is the very efficacity of the Divine Will which leaves untouched the freedom of choice: in fact it is precisely the efficacity of the Divine Will which causes the freedom of choice. He writes: "Accordingly the idea [God has of future contingents] . . . represents the divine essence inasmuch as it [the essence] is the will of God, or (to speak more properly) inasmuch as it [the essence] is a form, known by the divine intellect, by way of being the will of God (*forma cognita . . . per modum voluntatis Dei*). For, knowing this essence as will, God knows every determination and disposition of the divine will itself in relation to the creatures which are to be produced." Indeed, Bañes' enthusiasm for God's will leads him to state: "even though God were not to know future contingents as present to His eternity, but only in their own causes, His knowledge would be certain and infallible."[4]

This insistence of Bañes' on the will factor in divine causality "is simply borrowing trouble. If God determines the second cause and then, *because* He has so determined by His will, He can therefore know infallibly, are we not opening ourselves to the possibility of saying that 'God causes free acts before He knows them'?"[5]

In St. Thomas Aquinas the medium of God's knowledge seems to be both God's will and intelligence. "Now, effects pre-exist in their cause after the mode of the cause. Therefore since the divine being is His own intellect, effects pre-exist in Him after the mode of the intellect, and therefore proceed from Him after the same mode. Consequently, they proceed from Him after the mode of the will, for His inclination to posit in act what His intellect has conceived pertains to the will. Therefore the will of God is the cause of things." [6]

---

[3] Vd., for Luther's position, *De Servo Arbitrio*, in *Luther's Werke*, Vol. 18; ed. Weimar, 1883, passim, but especially pp. 635, 636. For Calvin's position see *Responsio ad Pighium de libero arbitrio*, in *Opera Omnia* (Amsterdam, 1671), Vol. VIII, Pt. II, pp. 116–177.

[4] Bañes, *op. cit.*, p. 207. Vd. also F. Stegmüller, *op. cit.*, pp. 402–405.

[5] A. C. Pegis, "Molina and Human Liberty," *Jesuit Thinkers of the Renaissance* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1939), p. 99.

Bañes seems to locate the medium of God's knowledge in the divine essence as will, or rather (here he strives for the utmost accuracy—*ut proprius loquar*, he writes), in a "form, known by the divine intellect, after the mode of the will of God."

St. Thomas seems to locate the medium of divine knowledge in the divine power, and although the divine will is doubtless in the divine power, nevertheless "the very being of the first efficient cause—viz., God—is His own act of understanding. Hence, whatever effects pre-exist in God, as in the first cause, must be in His act of understanding, and they must be there in an intelligible way." Observe that St. Thomas himself is here striving for the utmost accuracy: "and this appears still more plainly" (*et hoc etiam evidentius fit*), he writes, "if we add that the very being. . . ." [7] It *does* seem a better way to say it than Bañes'. God knows what He wills, because He wills what He knows. For Bañes, it seems, God knows what He wills, because He wills it.

In sum, Bañes seems to be forcing the note of the Divine Will until the delicate harmony of St. Thomas' adjustment of the Divine Will and intellect seems to sound false. At least that is what Jesuits as a rule think.

I need not add that the case against Molina might quite well be as telling as against Bañes—without Bañes' being right.

[Editors' note: The case against Molina is briefly as follows. Molina must suppose that God by His *scientia media* knows what a man would freely do were God to confront a man with the circumstances of his choice. We may look upon this situation as a dress rehearsal.[8] Peter, for example, not yet playing an actual part, goes through a rehearsal of that part before he plays it, and God sees in that rehearsal before the play the free choices which Peter would make when and if God puts him into the play. No doubt Peter's liberty in the actual play is preserved, because Peter's part was foreseen by God's *scientia media* to have been gone through freely in the dress rehearsal. No doubt too that God's causality of the play is preserved, because God created the play and its players. The difficulty lies in the rehearsal.

[6] St. Thomas Aquinas, *Sum. Theol.*, I, 19, 4, *Resp. ad fin.*

[7] St. Thomas Aquinas, *Sum. Theol.*, I, 14, 5, *Resp. in corp.*

[8] A. C. Pegis, "Molina and Human Liberty," *op. cit.*, p. 121.

Molina saw the difficulty, none better. It is this: in the rehearsal Peter's choice, because it is free, is an *objectum quod secundum se est incertum.*[9] Now, if Peter's choice in the rehearsal is in itself uncertain, because it is free, how can God know the uncertain with certainty? Molina says God knows it, because God's intellect is infinite. No doubt, no doubt. But the situation seems to be an impossible one: God knows that which is undetermined as determined. Molina admits that we shall perhaps never grasp how this seemingly impossible situation is nevertheless true, but he thinks that we must maintain the assertion that God knows with certainty that which is itself uncertain if we are to preserve the liberty of man and the causality of God. Many do not agree with Molina. They think that Molina is positing an uncaused event (the dress rehearsal, in which free choices are not yet determined by God's causality), or, if he is not, then he must maintain a causality of human choice by circumstances. Something, Molina's adversaries feel, simply *must* make the uncertain certain. This something is not, according to Molina, God's causality of the choice, nor is it the circumstances of the choice. If neither God nor circumstances determine free choice (in its dress rehearsal state), there's nothing left by which the uncertain may become certain, and the uncertain *must* become certain.]

[9] Molina, *Concordia liberi arbitrii cum gratiae donis, divina praescientia, providentia, et reprobatione,* pp. 311–312.

GENERAL BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources

Patrologia Graeca (J. P. Migne, *Patrologiae Cursus Completus*, Series I, 162 vols., Paris, 1857–1866, with later reprints).

Patrologia Latina (J. P. Migne, *Patrologiae Cursus Completus*, Series II, 221 vols., Paris, 1844–1864, with later reprints).

Anselm of Canterbury, St.:

Opera Omnia, PL 158–159.

S. Anselmi Opera Omnia, I (continens opera quae Prior et Abbas Beccensis composuit), ed. F. S. Schmitt (Secovii: ex officina abbatiae Secoviensis in Styria, 1938).

Proslogium; Monologium; an Appendix, in Behalf of the Fool, by Gaunilon; and Cur Deus Homo, tr. S. N. Deane (Chicago: The Open Court Publishing Co., 1903).

The Proslogion, tr. A. C. Pegis in *The Wisdom of Catholicism* (New York: Random House, 1949), pp. 203–228.

Aristotle:

Aristotelis Opera, 5 vols., edidit Academia Regia Borussica, ex recognitione I. Bekker (Berlin: G. Reimer, 1831).

The Works of Aristotle Translated into English, 11 vols., ed. W. D. Ross and others (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1928–1931).

The Basic Works of Aristotle, ed. R. McKeon (New York: Random House, 1941).

Augustine, St.:

Opera Omnia, PL 32–47.

Writings of St. Augustine (New York: Cima Publishing Co., 1947–   ).

The Works of Aurelius Augustine, 15 vols., tr. M. Dods (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1871–1876).

The Confessions of St. Augustine, tr. E. D. Pusey (Oxford: J. H. Parker, 1838).

AVICENNA:

Opera in lucem redacta ac nuper quantum ars niti potuit per canonicos emendata (Venetiis, 1508).

Metaphysices compendium ex arabo latinum reddidit et adnotationibus adornavit Nematallah Carame (Rome: Pont. Institutum Orientalium Studiorum, 1926).

BAÑES, D., O.P., *Schol. Comment. in I^am^ Partem*, ed. Douai, 1614. Text reproduced in F. Stegmüller, *Neue Molinaschriften, Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie und Theologie des Mittelalters*, Band XXXII.

BOETHIUS:

Opera Omnia, PL 63–64.

The Theological Tractates, tr. H. F. Stewart and E. K. Rand in The Loeb Classical Library (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1926).

De Consolatione Philosophiae, ed. A. Fortescue (London: Burns, Oates and Washbourne, 1925).

BONAVENTURE, ST.:

Opera Omnia, 10 vols. (Quaracchi: Ex Typographia Collegii S. Bonaventurae, 1882–1902).

Breviloquium, tr. E. E. Nemmers (St. Louis: B. Herder, 1946).

The Ascent of the Mind to God (*Itinerarium Mentis in Deum*), Prologue and Chs. V–VII, tr. A. C. Pegis in *The Wisdom of Catholicism* (New York: Random House, 1949), pp. 272–288.

CAJETAN:

Scripta philosophica: *De nominum analogia. De conceptu entis*, ed. P. N. Zammit, O.P. (Romae: Institutum "Angelicum," 1934).

In De Ente et Essentia, ed. P.M.-H. Laurent (Taurini: Marietti, 1934).

CALVIN, J., *Opera Omnia*, 9 vols., quarto (Amsterdam, 1671).

DESCARTES:

Oeuvres de Descartes, 12 vols., ed. C. Adam and P. Tannery (Paris: L. Cerf, 1897–1910).

The Philosophical Works of Descartes, 2 vols., ed. E. Haldane and G. Ross (Cambridge: The University Press, 1911–1912).

B. Joannis Duns Scoti . . . Commentaria Oxoniensia ad IV Libros Sententiarum, first 2 vols., ed. M. F. Garcia (Quaracchi: Ex Typographia Collegii S. Bonaventurae, 1912–1914).

John Damascene, St., *Expositio Accurata Fidei Orthodoxae*, PG 94, coll. 789–1228.

John of St. Thomas:

Cursus Philosophicus, 3 vols., ed. Reiser (Turin: Marietti, 1930).
Cursus Theologicus, 4 vols., ed. Solesmes (Paris: Desclée and Co., 1931).

Kant:

Immanuel Kant's Critique of Pure Reason, tr. N. K. Smith (London: Macmillan & Co., 1934).
Critique of Pure Reason in *Kant's Selections*, ed. T. M. Greene (New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1929).

Leibniz:

Discours de métaphysique, ed. H. Lestienne (Paris: J. Vrin, 1929).
La monadologie, ed. H. Lachelier (Paris: Hachette, 1901).
The Monadology and Other Philosophical Writings, tr. R. Latta (New York: Oxford University Press, 1925).
Essai de Théodicée sur la bonté de Dieu, la liberté de l'homme et l'origine du mal (Amsterdam, 1710).
New Essays Concerning Human Understanding, tr. A. G. Langley (Chicago: The Open Court Publishing Co., 1916).
Liber de Causis, ed. H. Steele (in *Opera hactenus inedita Rogeri Baconi*, fasc. XII, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1935).
Liber de Causis. Ueber das Reine Gute, ed. O. Bardenhewer (Freidburg: B. Herder, 1882).
Luther, M., *De Servo Arbitrio*, in *Luther's Werke*, Vol. 18; ed. Weimar, 1883.
Molina, L., S.J., *Concordia liberi arbitrii cum gratiae donis, divina praescientia, providentia, et reprobatione* (Paris: P. Lethielleux, 1876). Molina's minor works are reproduced in F. Stegmüller, *Neue Molinaschriften*, *Beiträge*, XXXII.

Plato:

Platonis Opera, 5 vols. in 6, ed. J. Burnet (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1905–1913).
The Dialogues of Plato, 2 vols., tr. B. Jowett (New York: Random House, 1937).
The Dialogues of Plato, 5 vols., tr. B. Jowett (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1871).
Porphyrii *Isagoge*, ed. A. Busse; *Commentaria in Aristotelem graeca*, edita consilio . . . Academiae . . . Borussicae, Vol. IV (1), Berlin, 1887.

SPINOZA:

Benedicti de Spinoza Opera, ed. J. Van Vloten and J. P. N. Land (Hagae Comitum: M. Nijhoff, 1913–1914).

Spinoza's Ethics and "De Intellectus Emendatione," ed. E. Rhys in Everyman's Library (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1910).

THOMAS AQUINAS, ST.:

Opera Omnia, 34 vols., ed. E. Frette and P. Mare (Paris: Vivès, 1872–1880).

S. Thomae de Aquino Ordinis Praedicatorum Summa Theologiae, cura et studio Instituti Studiorum Medievalium Ottaviensis ad textum S. Pii PP. V iussu confectum recognita. Vols. 1–4, 1941–1944 (Ottawa: Impensis Studii Generalis O. Pr.).

S. Thomae de Aquino Doctoris Angelici Summa Contra Gentiles, Editio Leonina Manualis (Romae: Apud Sedem Commissionis Leoninae, 1934).

S. Thomae Aquinatis Opuscula Omnia, 5 vols., ed. P. Mandonnet (Paris: P. Lethielleux, 1927).

Scriptum super Libros Sententiarum Magistri Petri Lombardi, 4 vols., ed. P. Mandonnet and F. Moos (Paris: P. Lethielleux, 1929–1947).

In Metaphysicam Aristotelis Commentaria, ed. P. Fr. M.-R. Cathala (Taurini: Marietti, 1926).

In Aristotelis librum de Anima commentarium, ed. A. M. Pirotta, O.P. (Taurini: Marietti, 1925).

Quaestiones Disputatae, 5 vols. (Romae, 1942).

Le "De Ente et Essentia" de s. Thomas d'Aquin, ed. M.-D. Roland-Gosselin (*Bibliothèque Thomiste*, Vol. VIII, Kain: Le Saulchoir, 1926).

Sermo seu Tractatus De Ente et Essentia, ed. L. Baur, *Series Scholastica*, I (Münster i. West., 1933).

In Librum Boethii de Trinitate Quaestiones Quinta et Sexta, ed. P. Wyser, O.P. (Fribourg: Philosophical Society Publications, 1948).

Summa Theologica, 22 vols., tr. by the Dominican Fathers (London: Burns, Oates & Washbourne, 1920–1922).

Summa Contra Gentiles, 5 vols., tr. by the Dominican Fathers (New York: Benziger Bros., 1928–1929).

Basic Writings of St. Thomas Aquinas, 2 vols., ed. A. C. Pegis (New York: Random House, 1945).

Introduction to St. Thomas Aquinas, ed. A. C. Pegis (New York: Random House, 1948).

On Being and Essence, tr. C. Riedl (Toronto: St. Michael's College, 1937).

On Being and Essence, tr. A. A. Maurer, C.S.B. (Toronto: The Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1949).

On the Power of God, 3 vols., tr. by the English Dominican Fathers (London: Burns, Oates & Washbourne, 1932–1934).

On Spiritual Creatures, tr. M. Fitzpatrick (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1949).

The Trinity and the Unicity of the Intellect, tr. Sr. Rose Emmanuella Brennan, S.H.N. (St. Louis: B. Herder, 1946).

The Soul, tr. J. P. Rowan (St. Louis: B. Herder, 1949).

Secondary Sources

Adler, M., "The Demonstration of God's Existence," *The Thomist* (The Maritain Volume), V, Jan., 1943 (New York: Sheed & Ward), pp. 188–218.

———, *What Man Has Made of Man* (New York: Longmans, Green & Co., 1937).

Anderson, J. F., *The Bond of Being* (St. Louis: B. Herder, 1949).

Arnou, R., S.J., *De quinque viis sancti Thomae ad demonstrandam Dei existentiam apud antiquos Graecos et Judaeos praeformatis vel adumbratis* (Romae: Pont. Univ. Gregoriana, 1932).

———, "Platonisme des pères," *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique*, XII, 2, 1935, coll. 2258–2392.

Bergson, H., *L'évolution créatrice* (Paris: F. Alcan, 1908).

———, *Les deux sources de la morale et de la religion* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1942).

———, *Essai sur les données immédiates de la conscience* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1944).

———, *Matière et mémoire* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1946).

———, *Creative Evolution*, tr. A. Mitchell (New York: H. Holt and Co., 1911).

———, *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion*, tr. R. Audra and C. Brereton (New York: H. Holt and Co., 1935).

———, *Matter and Memory*, tr. N. M. Paul and W. S. Palmer (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1911).

Blondel, M., *La pensée* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1948).

———, *L'être et les êtres* (Paris: F. Alcan, 1936).

Bonnefoy, J., O.F.M., *La nature de la théologie selon saint Thomas d'Aquin* (Paris: J. Vrin, 1939).

Bremond, A., S.J., "L'argument du Premier Moteur dans le 'Contra Gentes'," *La dilemme Aristotélicien*, *Archives de Philosophie*, X, 2, pp. 142–154.

CHAMBAT, L., O.S.B., "La 'tertia via' dans saint Thomas et Aristote," *Revue Thomiste*, X (1927), pp. 334–338.

———, "La 'quarta via' de saint Thomas," *Revue Thomiste*, XI, (1928), pp. 412–422.

CHENU, M.-D., O.P., "La théologie comme science au XIII^e siècle," *Archives, d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du moyen âge* (Paris: J. Vrin, 1927), pp. 31–71.

CHESTERTON, G. K., *St. Thomas Aquinas* (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1933).

CHEVALIER, J., *La notion de nécessaire chez Aristote et chez ses prédécesseurs* (Paris: F. Alcan, 1915).

CHOSSAT, M., S.J., "Agnosticisme," *Dictionnaire apologétique de la foi catholique*, I, coll. 25–76.

———, "Dieu, sa nature selon les scolastiques," *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique*, IV, 1, coll. 1152–1243.

COCHRANE, C., *Christianity and Classical Culture* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1939).

D'ARCY, M. C., S.J., *Pain and the Providence of God* (Milwaukee: Bruce, 1935).

DENZINGER, H., *Enchiridion Symbolorum, Definitionum et Declarationum de Rebus Fidei et Morum*, ed. Bannwart-Umberg (Friburgi Brisgovae: B. Herder, 1922).

DESCOQS, P., S.J., *Praelectiones theologiae naturalis*, 2 vols. (Paris: G. Beauchesne, 1932).

DONNELLY, P. J., S.J., "On the Development of Dogma and the Supernatural," *Theological Studies*, VIII (1947), pp. 471–491.

———, "Discussions on the Supernatural Order," *Theological Studies*, IX (1948), pp. 213–249.

———, "Gratuity of the Beatific Vision and the Possibility of a Natural Destiny," *Theological Studies*, XI (1950), pp. 374–404.

DONOVAN, Sr. M. Annice, *The Henological Argument for the Existence of God in the Works of St. Thomas Aquinas*, doctoral dissertation (Notre Dame, 1946).

DUHEM, P., *Le système du monde*, vol. V (Paris: A. Hermann et Fils, 1917).

FOREST, A., *La structure métaphysique du concret selon Saint Thomas d'Aquin, Études de philosophie médiévale*, XIV (Paris: J. Vrin, 1931).

GAGNEBET, R., O.P., "La nature de la théologie speculative," *Revue Thomiste*, XLIV (1938), pp. 1–39; 213–225; 645–674.

GARRIGOU-LAGRANGE, R., O.P., *Dieu, son existence et sa nature* (Paris: G. Beauchesne, 1923).

Garrigou-Lagrange, R., O.P., *God, His Existence and His Nature*, tr. Dom Bede Rose, O.S.B. (St. Louis: B. Herder, 1939).

Geiger, L.-B., O.P., "Existentialisme, essentialisme et ontologie existentielle," *Étienne Gilson Philosophe de la Chrétienté* (Paris: Les editions du Cerf, 1949), pp. 227–274.

———, *La participation dans la philosophie de s. Thomas d'Aquin. Bibliothèque Thomiste*, XXIII (Paris: J. Vrin, 1942).

Geny, P., S.J., "A propos des preuves thomistes de l'existence de Dieu," *Revue de Philosophie*, XXXI (1924), pp. 575–601.

Gilson, E., *La liberté chez Descartes et la théologie* (Paris: F. Alcan, 1913).

———, *La philosophie de saint Bonaventure* (Paris: J. Vrin, 1924).

———, "Pourquoi saint Thomas a critiqué saint Augustin," *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du moyen âge*, I (1926–1927), pp. 5–127.

———, *Reason and Revelation in the Middle Ages* (New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1928).

———, "Les sources gréco-arabes de l'Augustinisme Avicennisant," *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du moyen âge*, IV (1929), pp. 5–149.

———, *L'esprit de la philosophie médiévale* (Paris: J. Vrin, 1932).

———, *Le réalisme méthodique* (Paris: P. Téqui, 1935).

———, *The Spirit of Mediaeval Philosophy*, tr. Downes (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1936).

———, *The Unity of Philosophical Experience* (New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1937).

———, *The Philosophy of St. Bonaventure*, tr. Dom. I. Trethowan and F. J. Sheed (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1938).

———, *Réalisme thomiste et critique de la connaissance* (Paris: J. Vrin, 1939).

———, *Christianity and Philosophy*, tr. R. MacDonald, C.S.B. (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1939).

———, *The Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas*, tr. E. Bullough (St. Louis: B. Herder, 1941).

———, *God and Philosophy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1941).

———, *Introduction à l'étude de saint Augustin*, 2d ed. (Paris: J. Vrin, 1943).

———, *Études sur le rôle de la pensée médiévale dans la formation du système cartésien*, 2d ed. (Paris: J. Vrin, 1945).

———, *La philosophie au moyen âge*, 3d ed. (Paris: Payot, 1947).

———, *Le Thomisme*, 5th ed., *Études de philosophie médiévale*, I (Paris: J. Vrin, 1945).

Gilson, E., *Philosophie et Incarnation selon Saint Augustin* (Université de Montreal: Institut d'Études Médiévales, 1947).

———, *L'être et l'essence* (Paris: J. Vrin, 1948).

———, *Being and Some Philosophers* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1949).

Goichon, A. M., *La distinction de l'essence et de l'existence d'après Ibn Sina* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1937).

———, *La philosophie d'Avicenne* (Paris: Adrien-Maisonneuve, 1944).

Heris, C., O.P., "La preuve de l'existence de Dieu par les vérités éternelles," *Revue Thomiste*, X (1926), pp. 330–341.

Hoenen, P., S.J., *La théorie du jugement d'après St. Thomas d'Aquin, Analecta Gregoriana*, XXXIX (Romae: Univ. Gregorianae, 1946).

Huxley, J., *Essays of a Biologist* (New York: Knopf, 1923).

Jeans, Sir James, *Mysterious Universe* (London: Macmillan & Co., 1932).

Jolivet, R., *Essai sur les rapports entre la pensée grecque et la pensée chrétienne* (Paris: J. Vrin, 1931).

———, *La notion de substance* (Paris: J. Vrin, 1929).

———, *Traité de Philosophie*, vol. III, *Métaphysique*, 3d ed. (Paris: F. Vittle, 1946).

Joly, R., *La preuve de l'existence de Dieu par les degrés de l'être: "quarta via" de la somme théologique*. Sources et exposés (Gand, 1920).

Journet, C., *Introduction à la théologie* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1947).

Junkersfeld, Sr. M. Julienne, *The Aristotelian-Thomistic Conception of Chance*, doctoral dissertation (Notre Dame, 1946).

Lemaitre, C., S.J., "La preuve de l'existence de Dieu par les degrés des êtres," *Nouvelle Revue Théologique*, 1927, pp. 331–339; 436–468.

Lubac de H., S.J., *Surnaturel*. Études Historiques (Paris: Aubier, 1946).

Mandonnet, P., "Bañes," *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique*, II, 1, coll. 141 sqq.

Maquart, F.-X., *Elementa Philosophiae*, t. III, p. 1, *Metaphysica* (Paris: A. Blot, 1938).

Maréchal, J., S.J., *Le point de départ de la métaphysique*, Vol. V, 3rd ed. (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1944).

Maritain, J., *Antimoderne* (Paris: P. Téqui, 1922).

———, *Réflexions sur l'intelligence et sur sa vie propre* (Paris: Nouvelle Libraire Nationale, 1926).

———, *La philosophie Bergsonienne*. Études critiques (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1931).

MARITAIN, J., *Distinguer pour unir, ou les degrés du savoir* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1932).

———, *Le songe de Descartes* (Paris: Correa, 1932).

———, *De la philosophie chrétienne* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1933).

———, *Sept leçons sur l'être, et les premiers principes de la raison spéculative* (Paris: P. Téqui, 1934).

———, *Science et sagesse* (Paris: Labergerie, 1935).

———, *La philosophie de la nature* (Paris: P. Téqui, 1935).

———, *The Degrees of Knowledge*, tr. B. Wall and M. Adamson (London: Century Press, 1937).

———, *Science and Wisdom*, tr. B. Wall (New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1940).

———, *A Preface to Metaphysics*, tr. E. I. Watkin (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1940).

———, "Sur la doctrine de l'aséité divine," *Mediaeval Studies*, V (1943), pp. 43 sqq.

———, *The Dream of Descartes*, tr. M. Anderson (New York: New York Philosophical Library, 1944).

———, *Existence and the Existent*, tr. L. Galantiere and G. B. Phelan (New York: Pantheon Books, Inc., 1949).

———, *St. Thomas and the Problem of Evil* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1942).

MASCALL, E. L., B.D., *He Who Is* (New York: Longmans, Green & Co., 1945).

———, *Existence and Analogy* (New York: Longmans, Green & Co., 1949).

MEYERSON, E., *Identité et realité* (Paris: F. Alcan, 1908).

MOTTE, A. R., O.P., "A propos des 'cinq voies'," *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques*, XXVII (1938), pp. 577–582.

NEWMAN, J. H., *Apologia pro vita sua*, ed. C. F. Harrold (New York: Longmans, Green & Co., 1947).

PARENT, J.-M., "La notion de dogme au XIII^{e} siecle," *Études d'histoire littéraire et doctrinale du XIII^{e} siècle*, premiere serie (Ottawa: Institut d'Études Médiévales, 1932), pp. 141–163.

PAULUS, J., *Henri de Gand. Essai sur les tendances de sa métaphysique*, *Études de Philosophie Médiévale*, XXV (Paris: J. Vrin, 1938).

———, "Le caractère métaphysique des preuves thomistes de l'existence de Dieu," *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du moyen âge*, IX (1934), pp. 143–153.

PEGHAIRE, J., C.S.SP., *Intellectus et Ratio selon S. Thomas d'Aquin* (Paris: J. Vrin, 1936).

PEGIS, A. C., *St. Thomas and the Greeks* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1939).

PEGIS, A. C., "Molina and Human Liberty," *Jesuit Thinkers of the Renaissance* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1939), pp. 75–131.

———, "Necessity and Liberty: An Historical Note on St. Thomas Aquinas," *The New Scholasticism*, XV, 1 (January, 1941), pp. 18–45.

———, "The Dilemma of Being and Unity," *Essays in Thomism* (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1942), pp. 151–183; 379–382.

———, "The Mind of St. Augustine," *Mediaeval Studies*, VI (1944), pp. 1–61.

———, "Cosmogony and Knowledge," *Thought*, XVIII, 71 (December, 1943), pp. 643–664; XIX, 73 (June, 1944), pp. 269–290; XX, 78 (September, 1945), pp. 473–498.

———, "Principale Volitum: Some Notes on a Supposed Thomistic Contradiction," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, IX, 1 (September, 1948), pp. 51–70. For the discussion on this article, cf. *ibid.*, pp. 71–97; IX, 2 (December, 1948), pp. 284–293.

———, "Nature and Spirit: Some Reflections on the Problem of the End of Man," *Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association*, XXIII (1949), pp. 62–79.

———, *The Wisdom of Catholicism* (New York: Random House, 1949).

PENIDO, M.T.-L., *Le rôle de l'analogie en théologie dogmatique* (Paris: J. Vrin, 1931).

PHELAN, G. B., *St. Thomas and Analogy* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1941).

PRADO DEL, N., O.P., *De Veritate Fundamentali Philosophiae Christianae* (Fribourg: Ex Typis Consociationis Sancti Pauli, 1911).

RAEYMAEKER DE, L., *Philosophie de l'être. Essai de synthèse métaphysique* (Louvain: Institut Superieur de Philosophie, 1946).

REGIS, L.-M., "La philosophie de la nature," *Philosophie*, I (Ottawa: Collège Dominicain, 1936), pp. 127–156.

———, *L'Odyssée de la métaphysique* (Université de Montreal: Institut d'Études Médiévales, 1949).

ROLAND-GOSSELIN, M. D., O.P., *Le "De Ente et Essentia" de S. Thomas d'Aquin, Bibliothèque Thomiste*, VIII (Kain: Le Saulchoir, 1926).

SCHMIDT, P. W., S.V.D., *Der Ursprung der Gottesidee*, 6 vols. (Münster, 1926).

SERTILLANGES, A. D., O.P., "A propos des preuves de Dieu. La troisième voie thomiste," *Revue de Philosophie*, XXXII (1925), pp. 319–330.

———, "Sur la démonstrabilité de Dieu. Comment on prouve Dieu," *Revue Apologétique*, XLVI (1928), pp. 385–395; 515–521.

———, *Le Christianisme et les Philosophies* (Paris: Aubier, 1939).

———, "L'idée de creation dans saint Thomas d'Aquin," *Revue de théologie et de philosophie* (April, 1907).

SIMON, Y., *Introduction à l'ontologie du connaître de la connaissance* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1934).

———, *Critique de la connaissance morale* (Paris: Labergerie, 1934).

———, *Prévoir et savoir.* Études sur l'idée de la necessité dans la pensée scientifique et en philosophie (Montreal: Editions de l'Arbre, 1944).

SMITH, G., S.J., "Intelligence and Liberty," *The New Scholasticism*, XV, 1 (January, 1941), pp. 1–17.

———, "A Date in the History of Epistemology," *The Thomist* (The Maritain Volume), V, Jan., 1943 (New York: Sheed & Ward), pp. 246–255.

———, "Avicenna and the Possibles," *The New Scholasticism*, XVII, 4 (October, 1943), pp. 340–357.

———, "Before You Start Talking About God," *The Modern Schoolman*, XXII, 1 (November, 1945), pp. 24–43.

———, "The Natural End of Man," *Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association*, XXIII (1949), pp. 47–61.

SYNAVE, P., O.P., "La revelation des vérités divines naturelles d'après s. Thomas d'Aquin," *Mélanges Mandonnet*, I (Paris: J. Vrin, 1930), pp. 327–370.

THIRY, L., *Speculativum-practicum secundum S. Thomam, quo modo se habeant in actu humano* (Romae: B. Herder, 1939).

TONQUÉDEC DE, J., S.J., *La critique de la connaissance* (Paris: G. Beauchesne, 1929).

VAN STEENBERGHE, E., "Molina" and "Molinisme," *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique*, X, 11, coll. 2090–2092; 2094–2187.

VAUX DE, R., O.P., *Notes et Textes sur l'Avicennisme Latin aux confins des XII et XIII^e^ siècles, Bibliothéque Thomiste*, XX (Paris: J. Vrin, 1934).

VIGNAUX, P., "Nominalisme," *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique*, XI, 1931, coll. 717–784.

———, *La pensée au moyen âge* (Paris: Libraire Armand Colin, 1938).

———, *Luther, Commentateur des Sentences* (Paris: J. Vrin, 1931).

WEBB, C., *Studies in the History of Natural Theology* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1915).

ZEDLER, B., "St. Thomas and Avicenna in the 'De Potentia Dei'," *Traditio*, VI (1948), pp. 105–159.

INDEX

Abstraction,
  formal, 168-170
  orders of, 7-12
  total, 166, 167
Accidental,
  cause, 91, 92
  series of, causes, 95, 96
Act,
  esse is, 10, 11
  if limited, is caused, 15, 16
  is not, if limited, identified with its subject, 11-13
  metaphysics and, 25sqq.
Action, see Operation
Adler, M. J., 265, 281
  the argument from motion and causation and, 158-161
Agent,
  instrumental, 146, 147
  intellect and universals, 29, 30
  patient and, 103, 104, 118, 119
  principal, 117-120, 147
Agnosticism, 67sqq.
Alexander, F.,
  on advent of life, 265
Analogy,
  of attribution, 171-173
  is in knowledge, 13
  kinds of, 165-178
  mixed cases of, 173
  of proper proportionality, 171-173
Anderson, J. F., 179, 281
Anselm, St., 66, 277
  proof of God in, 60, 61
Anthropomorphism, 165
Appetite,
  act of, 213, 214
  determinants of, 209-213
  the good and, 212, 213
  in practical knowledge, 4-6
A priori,
  a posteriori and, 57, 58
Aristotle, 20, 21, 52, 58, 66, 71, 79, 81, 84, 85, 100, 101, 115, 128, 139, 152, 179, 186, 192, 199, 207, 222, 272, 278
  the chance event in, 148, 149
  on definition, 73, 74
  and First Mover, 31
  future contingents in, 202, 203
  immanent and transitive action in, 77, 103
  knowledge in, 234-236, 260
  motion in, 89, 90, 262, 263
  necessity and contingence in, 233-237
  against Plato, 28-30, 233, 263
  and plurality, 30, 31
  proof in, 75, 226
  quia proof in, 72-74
  and "substantialism," 26sqq.
  theology and, 30, 31
  universals, individuation and, 29, 30
  on the unknowable, 68
Arnou, R., 52, 53, 114, 192, 281
Atheism,
  possibility of, 155
Atomism, 262, 263
Attributes,
  entitative and operative, 183, 193

Augustine, St., 113, 128, 139, 186, 191, 192, 216, 258, 278
  end of man in, 268
  love in, 213
  Platonism and, 31-33
  proof in, 40-42, 60
  proof in St. Thomas and, 43-47, 50-52
"Author of Nature,"
  argument for, from finality, 147
Avicenna, 128, 232, 248, 278
  universals in, 238-241

Bañes, D., 208, 278
  vd. Appendix
Becoming, see Motion, Change
Being, see Metaphysics
  being as being, 8, 9
  causality and limited, 79-80
  ens habens esse, 263sqq.
  formal abstraction of, 168, 169
  God's name is, 155-157
  intentional, 195-197
  knowledge of, 13, 137, 138
  proof and, 37, 38, 40
Bergson, H., 162, 282
  proof of God by, 157, 158
Blondel, M., 162, 282
  proof of God by, 158
Boethius, 189, 278
Bonaventure, St., 63, 66, 278
Bonnefoy, J., 21, 282
Bremond, A., 115, 282

Cajetan, 179, 279
Calvin, J., 208, 279
  vd. Appendix
Category,
  God not in, 108-113, 123, 124, 128, 134
Cause,
  accidental, 91, 92, 153
  of being, 263sqq.
  chance and, 148-151
  change and, 78, 89, 90, 107-113
  circularity and, 114
  effect and, are one, yet different, 77-81
  effect of caused, 16, 154
  efficient, 90, 116-125, 228, 265, 266
Cause—*Continued*
  explanation and, 260sqq.
  final, 90, 91, 140-151, 209, 210
  instrumental, 92-95, 117-120
  knowledge and, 140-151
  limited being and, 79
  need of, for plurality, 15
  no medium between, and effect, 121, 122
  per se, 89-92, 107-113
  proof and, 58, 59, 64, 65
  proof of God from cause, 116sqq.
  proper (exemplar), 90, 91, 131-134, 140-151, 209, 210, 228, 250, 266
  quia proof proves cause, 83
  series and, 95-100, 107, 116sqq.
  simultaneity of, with effect, 89-92, 110-112
Caused, 16, 154
Chambat, L., 128, 139, 282
Chance,
  cause and, 148-151
  providence and, 251-252
Change, see Motion
  cause demanded for, 77, 78, 104-107
Chenu, M.-D., 21, 282
Chesterton, G. K., 48, 70, 282
Chevalier, J., 52, 282
Chossat, M., 54, 67, 71, 166, 192, 282
Cochrane, C., 151, 152, 258, 282
Contingent,
  future, 201-206
  necessary and, 125-128
  truth, 43-52
Corrupted,
  generated and, 125
Cosmological argument,
  Kant and, 68, 69
Creation,
  efficient causality and, 228, 229
  especial difficulty against, 227-229
  is exclusively divine, 227
  is a relation, 225-227
  notion of, 224-226
  proof of, 226-227

D'Arcy, M. C., 258, 282
De Lubac, H., 139, 225, 269, 272, 285
De Raeymaeker, L., 20, 66, 84, 85, 179, 192, 287

De Tonquédec, J., 20, 54, 84, 207, 287
De Vaux, R., 248, 288
Definition,
  nominal, 73, 74
  real, 74
Del Prado, N., 192, 287
Denzinger, H., 254, 282
Descartes, 66, 279
  proof of God in, 61, 62
Descoqs, P., 162, 282
Design,
  argument from, 140sqq.
Difference,
  is plurality, 15
Donnelly, P. J., 272, 283
Donovan, Sr. M. Annice, 139, 283
Duhem, P., 114, 283

Effect, see Cause
End,
  "Author of Nature" proved from, 147
  extrinsic, intrinsic, 146, 147
  God is, 268
  in what lies man's, 268sqq.
  of work and of worker, 2
Epistemology,
  Idealism and, 25sqq.
  Realism and, 25sqq.
Essence,
  Avicenna's, 238-240
  is known in an existent, 35-40
  is not *esse*, 27, 28, 264
  proof of God from, 135, 136
  St. Thomas on, 241-245
Essentialism, 25sqq.
Eternal,
  God is, 189
  truth, 43-52
Evidence,
  of sensation, 70, 71
Evil,
  moral, 255-256
  physical, 252-254
  providence and, 252-258
Evolution, 264, 265
Exemplar,
  cause and, 129-134
Existence, see *Esse*
Existentialism, 25sqq.
Experience,
  of God, 63, 64

Forest, A., 52, 53, 248, 283
Form,
  idea is, separated from matter, 244
Freedom,
  creation and, 239-246
  evil and divine, 256-258

Gagnebet, R., 21, 283
Garrigou-Lagrange, R., 71, 179, 192, 283
Geiger, L.-B., 270, 283
Generated,
  corrupted and, 125
Geny, P., 114, 283
Gilson, E., 4, 20, 21, 31, 52, 53, 66, 71, 114, 161, 179, 191, 192, 207, 208, 223, 232, 248, 258, 264, 272, 283, 284
God,
  the experience of, 63, 64
  how "being" names, 59, 155-157
  is not in category, 108-113, 123, 124, 128, 134
  nature of proof of, 75
  nominal definition of, 74, 75
  universal consent that there is a, 154, 155
Goichon, A.-M., 232, 248, 284
Good,
  God is, 186, 187
  God proved from the more or less, 136-139
  is principle of practical knowledge, 4-6
  relation of appetite to, 212sqq.

Happiness, see End
Henry of Ghent, 244
Heris, C., 139, 284
Hoenen, P., 66, 284
Huxley, J., 284
  on advent of life, 264, 265

Idea,
  Divine, 229-247

Idea—*Continued*
  Platonic, 233, 263
Idealism,
  argument against, 64, 65, 70, 269
  is a philosophy of essences, 25sqq.
  truth and, 44, 45, 64, 65
Illumination,
  Augustinian, 41
  Thomistic, 41, 42
Immense,
  God is, 188
Immutable,
  God is, 189
Infinite,
  God is, 187, 188
  in number, 98
  multitude, 98-100
  series of causes, 97-100
Instrumental,
  cause, 92-100
Intentional, see Being

Jeans, Sir James, 284
  on advent of life, 265
John Damascene, St., 152, 279
John of St. Thomas, 1, 20, 279
Jolivet, R., 52, 53, 84, 248, 284
Joly, R., 139, 284
Journet, C., 21, 191, 285
Junkersfeld, Sr. M. Julienne, 152, 285

Kant, 71, 279
  the ontological argument and, 68, 69
Knowledge,
  Aristotle on, 233-235
  basic distinction of speculative from practical, 3-5
  definition of, 194-197
  definition of divine, 197-199
  divine practical, 231sqq., 249-251
  explains, 260sqq.
  final cause and, 140-151
  God is, 144-145
  God proved from characteristics of some, 50, 136-138
  objects of divine, 199-206
  practical, 2, 3, 249-251
  speculative, 1, 2, 267
  speculative, and theology, 3

Law,
  cause and, 260sqq.
  God source of, 263sqq.
Leibniz, 66, 279
  proof of God according to, 62, 63
  theodicy, 18
Lemaitre, C., 139, 285
Life, see Operation
  distinction of, from non-life, 143
  motion and, 103, 104, 113
Love,
  act of, 213, 214
  characteristics of, 215, 216
  definition of, 216
  determinants of, 209-213
  Divine, could but would not refuse Itself, 269sqq.
  is a commitment, 270
Luther, M., 208, 279
  vd. Appendix

Mandonnet, P., 208, 285
Many, see Plurality
Maquart, F.-X., 13, 59, 285
Maréchal, J., 20, 208, 285
Maritain, J., 7, 20, 21, 53, 66, 161, 179, 192, 199, 208, 256, 258, 259, 285
Mascall, E. L., 21, 53, 114, 161, 179, 192, 285
Mathematics,
  depends upon existents, 39, 40
  number in, 43-45
  second order of abstraction and, 7, 8
Metaphysics,
  abstraction in, 169-170
  First Philosophy, 9
  nature of, 8-11
  the philosophy of nature and, 9
  Platonism and, 47-49
  theology and, 16-18
Meyerson, E., 272, 286
Middle term,
  first principles have no, 50
  in proof of God, 76, 77
Molina, L., 208, 280
  vd. Appendix
Motion,
  is caused by the "other," 12-17, 77, 78, 104-107

Motion—*Continued*
  in living beings, 103, 104
  local, "quantitative, qualitative," 102
Motte, A. R., 114, 286
Mover,
  first, is not in category., 108-112
  first, is unique, 113, 114
  proof of first, from motion, 106, 107
Mythology, 265
  mystery and, 266

Names,
  the first of the, of God, 180-181
  of God, 19, 165, 166
  secondary, of God, 183sqq.
Nature,
  man's, 269, 271
  philosophy of, 7
  will and, 210-212
Necessary,
  contingent and, 125-128
  God's knowledge of future contingents is, 201-206
  providence and the, 256-258
  truth, 43-52
Neoplatonism,
  creation and, 230, 231, 237, 238
Newman, J. H., 254, 286

Omnipresent,
  God is, 188
One,
  God is, 189-191
One and many, see Plurality and Unity
Ontological argument, 68, 69
Ontologism,
  argument against, 34, 35, 63
  creation and, 229, 230
  proof and, 33-35
Operation,
  transitive, immanent, 76, 77, 103, 104
  virtually transitive, 224sqq.
Order, see Creation, Providence, Law
Parent, J.-M., 286
Parmenides, 89, 159, 261, 262
Participation, 82sqq.
Paulus, J., 21, 53, 114, 232, 248, 286
Peghaire, J., 268
Pegis, A. C., 52, 83, 208, 211, 223, 232, 248, 263, 269, 272, 275, 276, 286

Penido, M. T.-L., 179, 248, 286
Perfection,
  God is, 184-186
Per se, see Cause
Person,
  man is a, 269, 270
Phelan, G. B., 179, 286
Philosophy,
  branches of, 9-17
  First Philosophy, 9sqq.
  of nature, 9
Plato, 46, 52, 139, 149, 152, 192, 236, 237, 244, 260, 268, 272, 280
  Aristotle's argument against, 27
  and essence, 26sqq.
  Ideas and, 262, 263
  intellect and, 29
  knowledge in, 232, 233
  myth and, 265
  "shape" of the world and, 264
Platonism,
  creation and, 230
  differs from realism, 47-49
  exemplarity and, 132-134
  is a philosophy of essence, 26-30
Plotinus, 40
Plurality,
  of being, 11, 12
  of essence and existence, 12
  is caused, 14-17
  is difference, 15
  is reduced to the one, 267
Porphyry, 280
  universals in, 237, 238
Possibles,
  are divine ideas, 224sqq.
Potency,
  act and, in relation to universals, 29, 30
  passive and active, 89, 90, 102-107
Practical knowledge, see Knowledge
Predestination,
  divine freedom and, 240-247
  is not necessitating, 256-258
  knowledge of God and, 203-206, 241-247

Predestination—*Continued*
  will of God and, 218-221
Pre-Socratics, 262, 263
Principles,
  first, 4
  first, of speculative and practical knowledge, 4-6
  first, of thinking and being, 68sqq.
  no proof by middle term of first, 58, 59
  seminal, 41
Proof,
  a priori and *a posteriori*, 57, 58
  causality and, 58, 59, 64, 65, 89-100
  Descartes and, 61, 62
  existence of God proved by *quia*, 59, 75
  the five ways of, are the same and different, 86-88
  of God, structure of, 75-77, 83, 84
  God's existence needs, 25sqq.
  Idealist and Realist, 49, 50, 65, 47-49, 64, 65
  Leibniz and, 62, 63
  middle term of, 76, 77
  nature and kinds of, 55sqq.
  nominal definition in, 74, 75
  Ontologism and, 33-35, 63
  quia and *propter quid*, 55-59, 77sqq., 81
  requisites for, 35-40, 49, 50, 64, 65
  St. Anselm and, 60, 61
  St. Augustine and, 60
  St. Thomas and, 41-46, 49, 50
Providence,
  chance and, 251, 252
  evil and, 252, 258
  necessity and, 256-258
  notion of, 249

Quia proof,
  causality and, 77, 78, 81
  existence of cause proved by, 82-84
  propter quid and, 55-59
Quia est, quid est, 177, 178

Realism,
  Christian, 31, 32
  metaphysics and, 25sqq.
  proof in, 64, 65
Regis, L.-M., 20, 287
Relation,
  appetite is a transcendental, 212
  creation is a, 225-227
Res et modus, 174, 175
Revelation,
  theology and, 18
Robert, J.-D., 21
Roland-Gosselin, M.-D., 53, 248, 287

Schmidt, P. W., 155, 287
Scotus, 63, 66, 244, 279
Series,
  causal, 95-100, 107, 116sqq., 123
Sertillanges, A. D., 54, 115, 128, 161, 248, 287
Simon, Y., 20, 21, 85, 152, 179, 208, 287
Simple,
  God is, 108, 112, 113, 180-183, 189-191
Smith, G., 54, 208, 223, 248, 272, 287
Socrates,
  knowledge according to, 232, 233
Speculative knowledge, see Knowledge
Spinoza, 63, 66, 280
Stegmüller, F., 208, 273, 274, 275, 278
Substantialism,
  Aristotelian, 28-31
Supernatural,
  natural and, 268, 269
Survival of fittest, 265
Synave, P., 21, 287

Theodicy, 18
Theology,
  Aristotle and, 30, 31
  definition of, 1
  demonstrates God and His attributes, 19
  is speculative knowledge, 3
  its place among speculative sciences, 7-17
  and metaphysics, 17
  natural and revealed, 18
  Plato and, 30
  and Theodicy, 18
Thiry, L., 20, 287
Thomas Aquinas, St.,
  analogy in, 166-173, 178

Thomas Aquinas, St.—*Continued*
  causality in, 81, 89, 90, 98, 99
  on cause and law, 263, 264
  the chance event in, 148-151
  creation in, 224-226, 228-232, 241-245
  criticizes Aristotelian substantialism, 30, 31
  criticizes Platonic essentialism, 30
  criticizes St. Anselm's proof, 60, 61
  criticizes St. Augustine's proof, 43-47
  on God's knowledge, 197-206
  on God's knowledge of future contingents, 201-206, vd. Appendix
  on God's will, 216-222
  how God is named Being, 155-157, 175, 176, 180
  on immanent and transitive action, 76, 77
  knowledge in, 193-197
  love in, 214-216
  on man's end, 269-272
  on man's nature, 269, 270-272
  nature of proof of God's existence in, 74-77
  the possibility of naming God, 165
  proof in, 41-52
  proof of creation in, 226, 227
  providence in, 249-251
  providence and chance in, 251
  providence and evil in, 252-256
  providence and necessity in, 256-258
  quia est, quid est, 177
  quia and *propter quid* proof in, 55-58, 59, 77, 82, 83
  secondary names of God, 183
    God is perfect, 184
    God is good, 186
    God is infinite, 187
    God is omnipresent, 188
    God is immutable, 189
    God is eternal, 189
    God is one, 189-191
  speculative and practical knowledge in, 1-6
  via negationis, 180-183
  on the ways of proving God's existence, 87, 88
    on the First way, 102-113
    on the Second Way, 116-125

Thomas Aquinas, St.—*Continued*
    on the Third Way, 125-128
    on the Fourth Way, 129-139
    on the Fifth Way, 140-151
  will in, 209-214
Transcendental,
  being is, and caused, 129-134
Truth,
  of knowledge, 44, 45

Unity,
  of being, 11, 13
  and plurality, 13-17
Universals,
  are existential in proof, 35, 36, 39, 40
  are explanatory, 260sqq.
  Avicenna and, 238-241
  Christianity and, 236, 237
  individuals and, 29
  Plato and Aristotle on, 232-236

Van Steenberghe, E., 208, 288
Vignaux, P., 208, 288

"Ways,"
  of causality, negation, eminence, 176-178, 180-183
  of proving God's existence
    the five, 86-88
    the first of the five, 103-113
    the second of the five, 116-125
    the third of the five, 125-128
    the fourth of the five, 129-134
    the fifth of the five, 140-151
  variants of the fourth way, 135, 136
Webb, C., 21, 288
Will,
  exercise of God's, 220-222
  freedom in divine, 205, 221, 222
  nature and, 210-212
  objects of God's, 218-220
  what is God's, 216-218
  what it means to, 209-222

Zedler, B., 248, 288

Date Due

[redacted]

~~MAR 4 '60~~

~~Mar 21~~

~~MAR 24 '60~~

~~FEB 16 '61~~

[redacted]

~~DEC 14 '64~~

~~JAN 17 '65~~

[redacted]

~~JUN 15 1987~~

~~DEC 2 [illegible]~~

Princeton Theological Seminary-Speer Library
1 1012 01007 4401